

<b>Committee(s)</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Barbican Centre Board	17 May 2023
<b>Subject:</b> CEO Report by the Barbican's Directors	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	<b>1,2,3,4,5,7,8,9,10,12</b>
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Report of: Claire Spencer, Chief Executive Officer</b>	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report authors: Chief Executive Officer and Directors, Barbican Centre</b>	

### **Summary**

The CEO Report comprises current updates from across the Centre.

### **Recommendation**

Members are asked to:

NOTE the Report and ENDORSE Management's approach to future activities.

## 1.

### Chief Executive Officer Report

We have had another busy period at the Centre, as we continue with a full creative programme whilst reshaping the organization to deliver on our purpose and values.

We are London's Creative Catalyst for creativity, curiosity and enterprise. Our values are Inclusive, Connected, Sustainable, Daring and Joyful.

Work has continued on building out our strategic framework and the draft document is included for Board discussion in the non-public section of this meeting.

Our five goal areas for discussion are:

- Excite and Engage our Audiences and Communities
- Fuel Creative Ambition
- Invest in our People and Culture
- Revitalise our Place
- Build an Enterprising Business

This report is structured by these categories, starting with my report and then followed by the reports of the Director Group where more detail is provided.

#### **Excite and Engage our Audiences and Communities**

In the financial year 2022, we estimate that we welcomed 1.5m visitors to the Centre.

We are developing our Audience Strategy which will cover how we both diversify and grow our audience and also consider the actual experience that visitors have when they are on site. We are currently going through a period of internal consultation and expect to bring the strategy for approval in the autumn.

I was delighted to attend the Barbican Residents Association AGM in April, where I shared some reflections on a year of change at the Barbican and some insights into the direction of travel for Barbican Renewal.

Other areas of focus are brand, marketing and communications, and deepening engagement, impact and legacy.

#### **Fuel Creative Ambition**

I was fortunate to spend some time in the rehearsal room for The Meaning of Zong prior to seeing the performance in the Theatre. A powerful piece of work that was lifted and contextualized by the addition of a post discussion with Giles Terrara, journalist Bonnie Greer and Councilor Andrien Myers. Its place in the City of London was particularly profound.

In terms of the future, we are framing our thinking around purposeful programming, collaboration, excellence in production, artistic talent development, and intellectual property development and content leverage.

### **Invest in our People and Culture**

The three main channels of communication we have been working on to both speak to and listen to our teams are the Barbican Bulletin (weekly internal comms), the Barbican All Team Meeting (occurs approximately every 6-8 weeks) and Coffees with Claire (small groups every 2-3 weeks)

Our last All Team Meeting was focused on Barbican Renewal and we were delighted to welcome 248 team members in person and online. 70 of those in attendance took time to rate the session – a 4.4 out of 5. We will continue to evolve these sessions to ensure they are useful and informative for our team. It was also terrific to have Board Member Stephen Bediako join us to hear some of the dialogue amongst the team both before and during the meeting.

April is annual appraisal month – all people managers have been busy providing feedback and setting objectives for 23/24 – with clarity around our purpose and values.

Director appraisals are also underway against the objectives set back in September 2022. My own appraisal will take place with the Town Clerk in May and will include feedback from the Barbican Board.

We have reformed the Barbican Management Team, with new focus and objectives. This group incorporates Heads of Departments from across the business and the Director Group.

More broadly, our people plan is shaping up around People and Leadership, staff culture, engagement and wellbeing, equity diversity and inclusion, talent and workforce development and casuals and freelancers. It is a big agenda.

### **Revitalise our Place**

Our glorious Centre continues to delight and frustrate in equal measure! Inflight projects are outlined in this report and the skill of our engineering and projects teams ensures that projects are completed with the minimum amount of disruption possible for our visitors and residents.

A project to complete some interim maintenance work to boost the reliability of the sewerage system is expected to commence in May.

We have commenced mobilization works with the Renewal Team and have reflected on our underpinning values lead approach to the project as well as the practicalities such as resourcing for the project team. It will be a complex project to execute so ensuring we invest the right amount of time in planning and preparation is key.

At the end of May I will be attending the Global Cultural Districts Network convening in Montreal to engage in an international dialogue about the innovation and the future

of cultural infrastructure and our engagement with the districts within which we sit. This is relevant for the Barbican Centre and our location in the City of London at a time of development and change.

Our priorities for this area of our plan are building renewal, development and operating proactive and strategic optimization of space, review of our operational support for the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and responding to the climate crisis.

### **Build an Enterprising Business**

In April we hosted 25 CEOs from the US and Canada and provoked debate on a range of issues (Audience Behaviour post-covid, Sustainable Careers in the Creative Industries and Ethical Programming all proved fascinating).

Thank you to the many of you who helped show the Barbican (and the City) at its very best - Karena Johnson (panel member for the career discussion) and Eleanor Nairne (introduced a whole new group of fans to the wonder of Alice Neel) and the whole Barbican Events team who ensured everything ran smoothly. Our colleagues at Mansion House complemented the Barbican experience with a dinner for our London visitors, where we were joined by a number of Barbican Board and team members.

We continue to focus on our financial management and delivering the budget position for 23/24.

Our priorities in this goal area are ethical and transparent business practices with appropriate governance, an optimal operating model, organizational efficiency, data and knowledge, growing our income streams and planning, budgeting and risk management.

Claire Spencer AM  
London, May 2023.

## 2.

## Fuel Creative Ambition

### Purposeful Programming Activities (March/April) and beyond

March and April were busy in the main Theatre with a range of dance and drama performing well at the Box Office and gaining positive reviews. **Ballet Black** returned with a new double bill; **Complicite's** adaptation of the novel *Drive Your Plow....* was a critically acclaimed, total sell out; **Cheek by Jowl's** Spanish language production of *Life is a Dream* was warmly received and well supported by funding partners and **Bristol Old Vic 's** *The Meaning of Zong* by Giles Terrera, struggled with sales but audiences deeply appreciated this powerful and well-crafted play, which exposed Britain and the City of London's historic role in the slave trade. A post show conversation including Andrien Myers, CCC Member and Claire Spencer was particularly thought provoking.

*A Play for the Living* directed by Katie Mitchell presented by Headlong Theatre company opened – an innovative touring model, the first of its kind in the UK which sees a play tour while the people and materials do not - an experiment in climate change theatre.

We've welcomed work on our stages from our Creative Collaborations/Public Programming colleagues with poet laureate, Simon Armitage, and friends; while performances from the final year acting students of the Guildhall School took place in the Pit and had a busy season of work in progress in our Rehearsal Room.

Public booking opened for both *A Strange Loop* and the return of *My Neighbour Totoro* the latter won an astounding 6 Olivier Awards, whilst our season by William Kentridge and company with *Sibyl* garnered the prestigious Olivier for Outstanding Achievement in Opera. The Theatre autumn season was launched at the end of April featuring several UK premieres, Barbican co-commissions and international productions.

Finally, we are in the early stages of scoping out Barbican Own Productions and will present outline plans during the summer, including partnership opportunities.

Classical music highlights in March/April included the *Greenhouse Effect* (initiated and curated by **Nonclassical**) an immersive sound experience in our Conservatory reflecting on our relationship with nature at a time of climate crisis. The project was a great example of alignment with and commitment to our "Sustainable" purpose and value. We also hosted **Ensemble Resonanz** who performed with violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja as part of her final concert in her Artist Spotlight series. The performance brought together a selection of short pieces reflecting the question of how composers have treated women across the centuries in line with our continued desire and commitment towards gender parity across the Music programme.

We also continued to diversify and broaden our music programme and cross the contemporary/classical boundaries with projects like: Devonté Hynes with the LSO the Grammy Award winning Devonté's compositions confront the complexities of 21<sup>st</sup> century identity. *OrchestraRAM* performed an orchestral journey into the world of

drum and bass music with the Guildhall Session Orchestra. Conversations are also ongoing with Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra about a residency in March 2025 with the LSO performing *The Jungle*. Wynton Marsalis' acclaimed original work, originally commissioned in 2017 for the 175th anniversary of the New York Philharmonic. The work expresses what we see in cities today. The Music team continue to develop relationships with Indian Classical Music producers and curators, Darbar, and the Darbar festival will return to the Barbican Hall and Milton Court Concert Hall in October 2024.

*Alice Neel: Hot off the Griddle* remains popular in the Art Gallery and is on track to exceed visitor targets, having reached 71 per cent of the paid visitor target to date. The exhibition will close on 21 May.

RESOLVE Collective: *them's the breaks* opened with a busy private view in the Curve on 30 March and has had positive press attention and over 8000 visitors so far.

Detailed planning continues for Carrie Mae Weems' exhibition of photography, film and installation opening in the main gallery in June, Julian Knxx: *Chorus in Rememory of Flight* in the Curve in September and *RE/SISTERS: A lens on gender and ecology* for the main gallery in October.

In March, Cinema celebrated this year's 95<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards in *Oscar Week* screening the films nominated in the Best Picture, International Feature Film, Animated and Live Action shorts. The team also saw the return of the full-scale *Human Rights Watch Film Festival*, with screenings accompanied by talks with filmmakers, film subjects and experts. *Family Film Club* dedicated its early March slot to **International Women's Day** screening a compilation of shorts made by international women filmmakers. It boasted full houses throughout 2023 first quarter, making it the most successful period in its long history.

In April, Cinema's new series *Cinema Restored* enjoyed a strong and diverse audience for *Losing Ground*, a masterpiece from the late Kathleen Collins, a rare example of Black independent film which we screened on 35mm. We've also enjoyed strong and enthusiastic audiences for *Queer East* showcasing queer cinema from East and Southeast Asia.

Our flagship Artistic Talent Development programme led by Creative Collaboration's *Barbican Young Programmers*, culminated its 7-month training with the *Chronic Youth Film Festival* curated and produced by the cohort. The festival was a huge success, screening a selection of international titles, and hosting lively discussions - all with great resonance with the life of young people in today's world.

We look forward to *Snapshots: Caribbean Cinema Up Close* in May, and in June, during Pride Month, we'll present *Queer 90s* a season featuring films from around the world that would change how LGBTQ+ people were seen on screen. Continuing to showcase diverse stories with *Oska Bright – Women in Film*, the world's leading learning disabled film festival, which returns with a screening celebrating the talents of learning disabled and autistic women in film, both in front of and behind the camera.

## Content Reach and Intellectual Property Development

Barbican Immersive (BI) is working on final planning to open *Our Time of Earth* at the co-production partner venue Musée de la Civilisation in Quebec City, Canada on the 17 June. It will run until January 2024 followed by a tour to the Peabody Essex Museum in Massachusetts, USA. A new tour has been contracted for *Mangasia: Wonderlands of Asian Comics*, which will travel to Bowers Museum in Orange County USA in 2024. *AI: More than Human* continues the development for an opening at CCCB Barcelona in October. A new commission: '*Reprocessing... Piano+AI*' with the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC) will be developed and shown at the Pavilion Mies van der Rohe as part of Sónar Festival in June before joining the exhibition. *Game On* is in final discussions to travel to two UK venues in 23/24.

BI launched the VR experience of *Virtual Realms: Videogames Transformed*. Made in collaboration with Vortic. As well as creating an opportunity for potential venues and partners to explore this highly experiential exhibition, it is available to the public through the Barbican's *Read, Watch, Listen* page.

BI continue explorations to create works off-site with Destination City. Collaborative discussions continue with the co-production partner in Japan for the *Fundamentals of Music* for new multi-site and multi-purpose commissions. Due to demand BI is working on extending the *AI: More than Human* exhibition (including new updated content) beyond the end of the tour in 2024.

The Music team is hoping to conclude negotiations with Sky Arts to broadcast 2-3 Live from the Barbican titles on their platform.

For the opening of **RESOLVE Collective: them's the breaks**, Visual Arts partnered with Dezeen to create two bespoke videos published on Dezeen's website and social media (combined reach: 5 million).

## Artistic Talent Development

Since the start of the 2023, Theatre has supported the new **Open Lab Cohort** in the Pit, where they've each had their week long residencies testing out ambitious ideas. The final work will be presented by 4 of the previous alumni of this important artist development programme in Autumn 2023.

The Music team is hoping to confirm another *Live from the Barbican* performance with the National Youth Orchestra in January 2024.

### **3. Excite and Engage Audiences and Communities**

#### **Press and Communications**

We launched the autumn Music and Theatre seasons in March and April respectively, alongside major announcements for A Strange Loop this summer and the return of My Neighbour Totoro this winter. We also delivered a major press campaign for the opening of the *Alice Neel: Hot Off The Griddle*, securing widespread and glowing media coverage, secured positive reviews for *RESOLVE Collective: them's the breaks*, and handled continuing intense media interest in *Soheila Sokhanvari: Rebel Rebel* right up to its closure. We supported a busy programme of Music, Theatre and Cinema events securing a range of preview, feature and review coverage. Will Gompertz appeared on the BBC Today Programme contributing to the debate about classical music funding.

#### **Marketing**

We've appointed an external consultant to review all areas of Membership with the aim of maximising profitability and efficiency. In-depth research based on existing data, marketing output and strategic reports, conversations and workshops with staff, and comparisons with other organisations will inform wide-ranging recommendations, which we'll receive from the consultant in the coming weeks.

Priority booking is a key benefit for members, and an important driver for member acquisition. 862 memberships are reported as being sold to benefit from the recent My Neighbour Totoro priority booking period. We are currently reviewing our guidelines for how we work with third party producers and ticket agencies to ensure the way we run our priority booking periods is always transparent and compliant.

#### **Concessions and discounts**

We are currently reviewing the concessions and discounts across our whole programme in the context of our new EDI and Audience strategies, having identified the four demographic groups we want to prioritise. Alongside the dynamic pricing project, we're considering initiatives that could help us shift unsold inventory, maybe using some kind of standby model.

#### **Social media**

On 12 May, we're running a social media mini-conference, a morning of presentations from external experts, panel discussions and participative sessions, all focussed on the ever-changing social media landscape, how the Barbican's social media strategy is performing and how we want to use our channels going forward. This is open to all staff, with the presentations being streamed on Teams for those unable to be there in person.

#### **Destination activity**

Planning is underway for activity that will promote the Barbican's 'wraparound offer', daytime and evening, with an initial focus on new audiences coming to us for A



Strange Loop and continuing through Carrie Mae Weems, the new Conservatory commission and Conservatory Lates and into the autumn. This will include creating a new welcome video, revamping our pre-visit emails, new content strands and an extension of our current influencer campaign, where content creators share their highlights of a visit to the Barbican.

### **Gulbenkian Foundation**

Following the initial enquiry into the Barbican's civic role as a major public arts centre, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (UK Branch) has supported the Barbican's journey of transformation.

We have commissioned action research around four workstreams within the Creative Vision: Creative Curriculum, Creative Academy, International Arts Summit and International Exchange. (See attached for further details)

Due to organisational changes, the decision was made to reframe the work supported by the Foundation around the newly formed Creative Collaboration department. We have developed and piloted a new model for evaluation with the support of external consultants Cornish and Grey. The process has explored best practice within and outside the Barbican and has involved the piloting and testing of evaluation methods around activities.

We have developed a Theory of Change for the department, forming the basis for an impact measurement framework enabling us to better demonstrate the value and impact of our work. In early 2023 we worked with The Liminal Space creative consultancy to transform the evaluation model into an interactive evaluation toolkit to ensure the process of monitoring and evaluating is robust but also engaging. The opportunity to pilot on a smaller scale, focusing on the area of our work with the most civic impact, has been valuable. The process has enabled the department to start exploring the shared values in the work approach across teams and embed reflection as a vital practice.

Over the past year, we have started the process of stakeholder mapping, that can be updated as the department becomes fully formed and continues to work with stakeholders. With members of the department, we have developed shared principles for stakeholder consultation and co-creation informed by real case studies. We have also utilised learnings from action research to create a process flow chart with the aim of providing a practical reference point for conducting useful and shareable research.

### Next Steps

**Creative Curriculum:** We are pursuing a conversation with Harris Federation a to evolve this research into an impactful program that focus on development of fusion skills. We will explore other partnerships to deliver a scalable program.

**Creative Academy:** We are developing the foundation curriculum and engaged with secure commitment from the city for fully funded apprenticeships, education/ training partner. The goal is for the program to being in September 2024.

**International Arts Summit** We are exploring what the Barbican can meaningfully contribute and facilitate important conversations and partners to deliver any events of this nature.

**International Exchange** will sit with People, Culture, and Inclusion. It is an interesting longer-term ambition but not a current priority for the organisation.

Creative Collaboration is now conducting a phased roll-out of the **evaluation model** by using it to review projects, embedding evaluation and impact measurement within working processes. This will require a process of application, careful monitoring, further iteration, and sharing learning with the wider Barbican to inform this area on a larger scale. The department will continue to update and share work focusing on stakeholder consultation and co-creation principles, mapping and research.

## 4.

## Revitalise our Place

### **Barbican Renewal**

Planning continues for the next phase of work on the Barbican Renewal programme. During its March meeting, the Renewal Board Working Group agreed that their meetings would move from monthly to bimonthly for the next phase, alongside reviewing and discussing the team structure, SWOT analysis and purpose and values work undertaken by the team.

The Renewal team gave an update on project progress at the Barbican all team meeting, which was well received, while the CEO updated Barbican Estate residents on the current status of the project and next steps at the Barbican Association AGM.

### **Engineering**

The infrastructure of the Barbican Centre and Exhibition Halls are well documented and continue to pose challenges for the team. Time is disproportionately split between attending to reactive breakdown and completing planned servicing works with more time spent on the former. The progression of Barbican Renewal will enable the swing to a more proactive and preventative maintenance works regime and more efficient use of both labour and materials.

The new IFM (Integrated Facilities Management) contract with Atalian Servest commenced at the beginning of April. The contract is managed on our behalf by the City Surveyor via the Property Facilities Management function. Servest were already providing cleaning services at the Centre, but the BRM (breakdown, repairs and maintenance) element is new. It is early days as they bed in, and the Centre establish the way both organisations work together.

### **Projects**

The Centre continues to work on the current programme of CWP and Capital projects. At present, 53 projects at various stages are underway with a value of circa £25m. The bulk of this relates to a £13m programme of fire safety works managed in conjunction with the City Surveyor.

Other recent highlights include:

- the replacement of Level 4 Frobisher Crescent heating including the introduction of new low carbon air source heat pumps,
- works to exterior of the glass surround to the lakeside staircase,
- upgrade/refurbishment of 3 main goods lifts,
- replacement of solids diverter pumps (the reason the tankers were needed),
- replacement of conservatory heating system.

Projects focus is increasingly about being strategically and operationally aligned and working collaboratively with Barbican Renewal.

### **Facilities Management**

In addition to the cleaning service, Servest are now also responsible for pest control and a few other ancillary services. Overall, these soft services are stable as cleaning

is by far the largest element and their performance was satisfactory prior to commencement of this contract.

### **Environmental/Sustainability**

The Centre continues to work closely with the City of London's teams to ensure alignment of our shared objectives and targets, particularly around the areas of Climate Action and Responsible Business. This collaboration was the basis of the £3million Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme grant (PSDS) in 2022.

A crucial part of embedding the strategy is to raise awareness of environmental issues throughout the teams and work has been undertaken with the Sustainability Steering Group and the Barbican Communications team to design an ongoing communications plan.

There are opportunities to share best practice, both inside and outside the sector – the Centre have been invited to speak at various conferences and seminars including those organised by Buro Happold, Adobe Microsoft and Wilmot Dixon. This is in addition to being consultees for the Theatre's Green Book for both buildings and production sections.

The Centre is now a member of ECHO (European Concert Hall Association) Sustainability Working Group. And we are delighted to have won the Bronze Sustainable Venue Award at the COOL Event Awards.

## 5.

## Invest in our People

Whilst we continue to manage operational and personnel matters, we have been working on a number of fundamental people areas including next steps around our EDI strategy, developing our approaches around organisation change/reviews and reconvening and ‘rebooting’ our Management Team.

### Senior Management Team

Senior management team meetings have been on hold since September 2022 whilst we recalibrated the mandate of that group. While we have been working on a strategy framework, we have gathered insights, including through a survey and are now in a position to reconvene these meetings with a new and clear terms of reference and the following objectives: -

- To take accountability to solve problems – through collaborative, cross team working
- To seek and share information – proactively seeking and sharing insights and solutions from other teams
- To share best practice – including bringing relevant external perspectives to help address organisational issues and to help meet our ambitions as outlined in our Barbican Plan
- To make decisions – decisively, in line with our values and through being more data informed

These will initially run every 3 months with an initial kick off in the Spring. They will be chaired by the CEO in partnership with a head of department. We will continue to monitor and course correct as is necessary.

### EDI

Following the approval and launch of our new EDI strategy in Feb/March, we have been working to set up the infrastructure for the new team and workplan. These include:

- We will be recruiting four new roles to the EDI team (two-year fixed term) – we hope to have new staff in place by June/July.
- We are in the final stages of drafting our detailed EDI action plan and tracker and are working closely with the Global Majority Network to develop the new anti-racism action plan.
- We will be refreshing and updating our EDI pages on the Barbican website over the next few months to ensure that we demonstrate transparency and progress.
- Our first full EDI strategy progress report will be sent to NEI Committee in July (six monthly thereafter).
- We are about to welcome two new diversity networks – the Pride Network and the Disability Network – and will be finalising the “Diversity Network Partnership Agreement” which outlines mutual expectations between the networks and the Barbican. Members may wish to note that as part of this Agreement diversity

networks will be sending two of their members to attend NEI and Barbican Board. For reference, the relevant sections of the Partnership Agreement are:

1. Network representatives (maximum of two) will be invited as attendees to the *Barbican Board* twice a year (including public and non-public sections but not including confidential sections)
2. Network representatives (maximum of two) will be invited as attendees to the *Barbican Nominations, Effectiveness, and Inclusion Committee* meeting twice a year (including public and non-public sections but not including confidential sections)

### **Casuals and Freelancers eg engagement, surveys**

We continue to review arrangements around our relationships with our contingent workers (particularly our 'Casual' colleagues). As well as continuing to operate across a range of services (venue hosting, box office, invigilating, bar service, retail) and across multiple shifts, we know we need to evolve and as such have been carrying out a few strands of work including: -

- Casuals Model and working with the Corporation

Whilst there are contractual and legal aspects that clearly need to be taken into account, there is a clear need to improve working practices and help bring more parity for all our colleagues.

Review of the existing operating model and use of casual workforce continues and although the flexible nature of the work Barbican does will necessitate a requirement for freelance or casuals, there is an opportunity to look at alternative arrangements. We are currently reviewing options around:-

1. Moving to a better balance employed staff.
2. Improving terms and relations with exiting casual workforce.

This mixed model is in line with other similar organisations and could work effectively. The business case is in preparation for consideration for the second week of May.

As well as reviewing the Barbican Casuals model, we are working with the Corporation to test certain interpretations of our contractual practices. We are also inputting into a piece of work they are conducting around '*reviewing the overarching arrangements for the use and deployment of Casual workers throughout the organisation, including the Barbican. It is recognised that a review is something that is long overdue. The Corporation are currently developing options and there will be further information made available in due course. Any options for change will involve consultation.*'

### **Hosts Workshops**

We've held facilitated workshops over February-March focused on host experiences, culture and engagement levels. A key aspect of these has been to build relationships, teamwork and 'reset'. These have also resulted in a co-designed team charter and

commitments aligned to our Purpose and Values. The team are now planning phase 2 of these initial sessions.

### **Casual Worker Project**

This has been focussing on several areas to improve the working environment and communications for casual workers, including: -

1. Communication flows, Consistency and frequency
2. Training and support
3. Review of structures/use of casual workers

During the last quarter, to continue to improve the relations with the casual workforce, the Handbook has been further revised to clarify certain points based on feedback from hosts and feedback through the casual project group.

We have committed to quarterly casual host meetings with the next meeting due in May. This will be across all front of house teams, providing a chance to share experience, with a further focus on internal communications, the summer programme and sales opportunities.

It is clear that from the recent meeting and feedback via other channels such as Coffee with Claire that there are challenges around trust. The focus in this recent period has been around creating time and space for Casuals to be heard as well as finding ways to build relationships.

There has been an effort to raise awareness of the anonymous feedback portal. Encouragingly, this was used effectively by hosts following a small change to the operating model in the cinema.

Recent refresher training was conducted with the host team along with ongoing Zero Tolerance training and opportunities to participate in the developing Audience Strategy.

To quantify where we are, a casual team survey is being remodeled to be issued by end of May.

## 6.

## Build an Entrepreneurial Business

### **Business Events**

The past year has offered more opportunities than ever before to manage multiple events in the many varied spaces around the Barbican and is allowing the team to offer more creativity when selling and delivering meetings and events.

The team celebrated success with wins at the London Venue Awards and Conference & Event Awards in both sustainability and best event categories, and with 352 events, over 167,000 attendees, 33 days of photoshoots and filming, 24 weddings and 14 Christmas parties, 2022/23 has ended on a high note, demonstrating the renewed confidence in the Events sector which is at its highest level for the first time in over 3 years.

New and innovative spaces around the building (including the versatile Pit Theatre) will be available for meetings or event hire for the first time this summer and traditional favourites such as the Frobisher Suites have undergone a refresh in time for the 23/24 season.

### **Commercial Development**

The Barbican Bars team have taken over operation of both cinema cafes (Cinema 1 and 2/3 on Beech Street). A mini-refresh has taken place, enlivening the space and making it more welcoming from the outside with plants in the windows. There are a number of further enhancements to the offer planned over the next few months, including extending the opening hours to 8am to 10pm from 2 May during the week and 10am to 10pm at weekends. A breakfast offer is being introduced and a Happy Hour from 6pm-8pm every day to encourage new destination evening drinkers in addition to our cinema audience. The new Cinema cafe team are excited by the potential the space provides.

The Stalls bar and cafe, which has not been operating at full capacity for several months due to the shutters being removed for H&S reasons, remains a work in progress. The counters have been replaced enabling the café to provide an improved display and food offer, but the shutters will not be installed until early June due to a supplier delay.

A significant project to upgrade the barrier and ticket machines in the Barbican car parks has been completed. Enabling greater automation of the process with number plate recognition and ticketless operation.

Benugo are installing screens in the Barbican Kitchen above the till points and hot food counter, to trial a new ordering system where guests order their hot meal from a simplified pricing structure presented on the screens at the till and pick up from the hot counter. This will mean that guests will not have to queue twice and will be able to sit down immediately having picked up their meal, which we hope will speed up service, simplify the process and fix an unintuitive 'customer journey'.



**Retail**

Foyer Shop sales exceeded our budget in 2022/23 and we were trading positively right up until the end of the Financial Year. The Retail Team performed our final stock take at year end which yielded excellent results, especially given the volume of sales and high footfall throughout the second half of the year.

Buying and sourcing for the Foyer Shop is currently focused on the Barbican's summer activations, primarily around A Strange Loop and a collaborative project developing a product range with Submit to Love Studio who exhibit their artists work at the end of July in the Curve Gallery.

Recruitment for a permanent Book Buyer is underway and, once in post, they will be focused on diversifying and refreshing our book offer, connecting our audiences with books and authors that have been selected in collaboration with teams and staff from across the centre.

Product development for the Gallery Shop is already underway for the Autumn exhibition, RE/SISTERS, opening in October. Christmas stock commitments and buying is also already in progress, as are plans to improve the way we offer merchandise to the Totoro audiences, offering more opportunities to purchase and increasing our capacity to sell.

## 7.

## Development

Since our last Board meeting in February, we have been delighted to welcome new individual donors such as Nicola Sawford and Michael Hadi, Soo Hitchin, Brian Harasek, and Jeremy and Angela Palmer to the Barbican's Patron programme. Additionally, we are deeply grateful for the renewal of past Patrons, including Alex and Elena Gerko (Director's Circle), Keith Salway, the Hollick Family Foundation, Tim and Catherine Cox (Premier Patrons), as well as an anonymous Patron, Premier Patron, and Director's Circle Patron.

We would also like to acknowledge and celebrate the generosity of the Barbican Centre Board and Barbican Centre Trust who not only give their time but also support. Since the last Board Report, we would like to acknowledge and thank David Kapur, William Russell and Irem Yerdelen for their Patron support as well as Director's Circle members Philippe & Stephanie Camu, and Farmida Bi.

This summer we are excited to announce an exciting partnership with long term champions of cinema, Campari. A brand that has always pushed the boundaries of creativity, unlocking the passions and talents of artists they are the perfect partner to collaborate with on the Barbican's sell out Summer outdoor cinema experience and screen talks programme. Through this partnership we will be able to take this iconic event series to new heights offering audiences a truly unique experience in the Barbican's iconic Sculpture Court.

In April, Sotheby's commitment to ensuring that the arts, and art careers, are more accessible to diverse audiences came to life as they facilitated a Young Barbican take over event across the entirety of the centre. The takeover saw affordable, accessible programming curated specifically for young audiences, but open to all, cut across art forms with something for everyone to enjoy. This partnership is truly working to break down the barriers to engagement, showing that the arts, just like the Barbican, is open to all.

We are also at the final stages of confirming exhibition sponsorship with a major sustainable fashion brand. Partnerships such as these were made possible by applying cross-team collaboration, using partnership to elevate wider Centre's programme and meet shared organisational aims around our impact.

The Trusts and Grants team are continuing to work with embassies and cultural institutes to support our international programme; recent grants include support from the Korean Cultural Centre UK, the Dutch Embassy and the Goethe-Institut towards the spring 2023 music programme. We also received a first gift of £20,000 from the Peter Sowerby Foundation's Good Causes fund, which among other areas supports artistic and creative activities which enhance the health and wellbeing of diverse communities. This generous grant will support Differently Various, Headway East London's takeover festival in the Curve Gallery this summer, which will be the culmination of our multi-year partnership with the ground-breaking charity for brain injury survivors.

Our supporters are not only integral to the running of the Centre financially, but they also enhance our programming for the further benefit of our audiences. Our gratitude and thanks to them all.