

Cultural Connectedness Exchange #2 – subtitles text as input to *YouTube*.

-*[Emma Smith]* Hello everyone. We're going to start the session now so if you're there give us a wave; let us know that you're there. You will be recorded so if you really don't want to appear, then we understand, but we would love to see you if that's possible. Lori's waving, that's great. Ruairi nice to see you. I'm delighted to have you all here, thank you very much for joining in. I'm going to ask everyone to just stay on mute -unless you are speaking- at which point I will make sure that everybody can do that. I'm working across a couple of screens, so excuse me if I look away. I'm looking at our agenda and what it is that we need to get through today. We will [make] a space where you will all be able to introduce yourselves and in that I'd like you to say: who you are; what area of art you're working in; what you're hoping to gain from the network and then I'd like you to pass on to a person who hasn't spoken yet. I hope that that's okay with everyone? Other things that we're going to do today are think about amendments and queries to the white paper that we've got; think about our next steps; think about our next meetings and then a couple of other notices, if anybody wants to share anything further then. Is that okay with everyone? Can I see a thumbs up from you please?

Fantastic. So, I'm going to invite everybody to be able to unmute themselves, but if you wouldn't mind not doing that just yet, I'd appreciate that. I just want to make sure that -when it comes to it- you will be able to speak.

I'll go first; my name's Emma. I'm the Director of the Liverpool Irish Festival. From the networking I'm hoping to meet artists, I'm hoping to meet other cultural organisations, I'd like to work more collaboratively and do better wayfinding across our network to help support Irish arts in England (and Britain more widely) and I would like to pass to William Foote please.

-*[William Foote]* Hello everyone; my name is William Foote. I am the Centre Manager for the Irish Cultural Centre in Hammersmith. I'm... during the meeting ... sort of... sort of a little bit of...of a repeat of what Emma said there; we're looking to collaborate with more artists, you know; showcase the best of Irish talent as much as we can in England, the UK and the world. Since Covid started we have an online digital channel and, of course, with Covid ongoing so many things keep getting thrown out of the pram and pushed into different times, so, it's just having a list of more collaboration, more of what we can do and more that we can showcase; yes, so I guess I'll just pass it to the person who's next beside me, which is Jean Maskell.

-*[Jean Maskell]* Hello. I'm Jean Maskell. I'm an independent artist, writer and ceramicist. I do most of my work between Liverpool and Wexford, where my family is, and [I'm] normally in Wexford six or seven times a year. I'm interested in better links, really, between Liverpool and Wexford -in particular- and helping to facilitate that, in any way that I can, with artists in Liverpool and Wexford.

-Who would you pass to Jean? -I'll pass to Patrick Morrison.

[Patrick Morrison] Okay, thank you Jean. Hello everyone; my name is Patrick Morrison. So I am currently Chair of Irish In Britain and but also I work for Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann so my day - and my world- predominantly revolves around traditional arts, traditional music... I've been involved in this since... well, since the Festival really, and working with Emma... I'd be interested to know how and what we do in culture -in terms of traditional music and language, and a bit of dancing and storytelling- actually ties in and works kind of hand-in-hand with other art forms, whether they be, kind of, what you think is traditional art forms or whether they be something which you think is more relative to a contemporary Ireland; I guess I'll put it that way. I'm gonna pass to... I'm gonna pass to Gerry.

-*[Gerry Molumby]* Hi Patrick, thank you; yeah Gerry Molumby here in Derbyshire. I've been involved with Triskelion Theatre over 30 years. I'm producing plays and concerts throughout the UK. Against Emma's introduction... I mean the power of networking, the more we can network and work together and share ideas, share artists, whatever. There's one thing we may get a chance to discuss later, it's around older people and reminiscences; I know Patrick and [xxx] and Irish In Britain have something up and running around that, maybe that's something as for all artists of some kind we could incorporate into the work plan if that's what you wanted to do.

Oh sorry, [on the] other hand I'll hand over to Ruari.

-*[Ruari Cullen]* Thanks Gerry. So I'm Ruari Cullen and I'm the Policy And Public Affairs Officer with Irish In Britain, so I mean I personally don't particularly work in the arts and culture area but Irish, Irish In Britain were very, very keen on supporting networks like [this, so it's] absolutely fantastic and it's great to be here today. So that's what we kind of hope to gain; to support your work and help facilitate networks and hopefully link in some of the outcomes from this with the parliamentary group that we work with quite closely, which is currently coming up with a bit of a calendar for the year ahead. Yeah, so thanks for having me today and I'll pass on to John Chandler.

-*[John Chandler]* That's me, hi everybody! Great to be here. Unfortunately I can't be here for all that long; I've got an appointment which I must get to in about half an hour or so, but I'm the founder and Chair of the Liverpool Irish Festival. I say that with some deference to my chum Terry Clarke-Coyne, who's also here this afternoon, who had some early events...the idea of which I plundered. His were mainly focused exclusively on music; the Festival -of course- encompasses much more than that, and virtually everything under the sun (probably far too much), but that we can deliver so much as a tribute to my Director, Emma, who's here today alongside us and I would echo what's been said, essentially by Emma and Patrick -former board member, as well as Terry- so we're over represented here I'm afraid to say, but I'm sure we'll be democratic about it and start to be so, but in terms of developing that connectedness that's been alluded to and raising profile and awareness and engendering some combination of support to increase the prominence of Irish originated arts, culture, history, heritage; I think that's what I'm looking to this organisation to assist us in delivering and I don't know who is it [next?]. . . Jennifer, who's below me on the screen, maybe it's your turn to take over?

-*[Jennifer Bennett]* Thank you so much, John. Hi, my name is Jennifer. I'm Cultural Heritage And Sports Project Officer at Birmingham Irish Association so hi! So, essentially my role at the association is to connect as many artists with the community as possible so when I had the email - and everything about this going on today- I was really excited because I thought, you know, it's joining in with all the support network -and hopefully contributing something of value to this, too- so that's why I'm here really. If I could pass on to... Lori... if I pass on to Lori, is that okay?

-*[Lori Wiseman]* Thanks Jennifer, my name is Lori Wiseman. I'm originally... I am American. I'm working on my Irish citizenship. I've been living here and traveling back and forth for about 30 years now. I've been here now 10 years raising two children. I'm interested in understanding relationships between how this -all kind of works in Europe- compares to the States, where it would be more commerce centred; where here it's a lot [more] relationship centred and organisations and I just I guess I'm trying to learn as I've tried to keep up with my practice, but I haven't been out showing my work much, mostly working as a mom.

I don't know who to pass on to; Rose, how about you? -*[Rose Morris]* Thanks Lori, I'm [based] at the Irish World Heritage Centre (Manchester) and the charity the Irish Diaspora Foundation and I'm also Chair of the Manchester Irish Writers. I've been a retired art teacher and a published writer myself and take an interest in all the cultural events at the centre. We have had some experience of collaboration with the Liverpool Irish Festival, in the past, like some of the writers went down to read on one occasion and we hosted one of theirs on another occasion at the Irish World Heritage Centre, so just want to just -you know- continue that, especially in these times. Maybe involve [each other] in more of these events as well, because it seems to be the experience, of the past year for those of us shielding and for the elderly, and we have some archives of reminiscence at the Irish World Heritage Centre that maybe Gerry's mentioned he could dip into, you know, maybe use in some way. I'll pass over to... is it John Mccarran? John Mccaff? -*[John McCafferty]* McCafferty; okay then. I'm an outsider. I stay in Glasgow. My Irish connections go back three generations when my family came from County Antrim over to Glasgow in 1840, so I know there's a lot of connection/similarity between Glasgow and the Liverpool... very similar so I say and I'm also interested in the, you know, the theatre, the Citizens Theatre -here in Glasgow- and they... my son lives in Dublin, so I go over there and go to The Abbey quite a lot as well. -*[Emma Smith]* Thank you... do you... Johnny, are you working within the arts or culture, particularly, or is it just a

hobby... -*[John McCafferty]* It's more of a hobby, yes, more of a hobby, yeah and I've now connected with [XXX] healthy connections around just now so I'm watching the programs every night you know so I'm enjoying... I enjoy that, you know, the Irish and the Scottish music, you know. -*[Emma Smith]* I think -although if I've got this wrong, please put your hand up- I think we've got to go to Terry last (but by no means least) and then have will we have seen everyone...

Has anybody been... if you if you've not been spoken to please lift your hand... No? Okay? So to Terry and then back to me.

-*[Terry Clarke-Coyne]* Hi everyone; yeah, Terry Clarke-Coyne. Sorry about the mad name; it's probably why no one chose me! Yeah, I'm principally a trad musician or very involved and passionate about all sides of Irish culture; particularly [with my] head in cultural connectiveness. I really think that, you know, this type of collaboration (of all of the factions) through the Irish communities is a new and a best step forward. As someone who lives in the hills, in north Wales, live, living and playing in isolation, you know, it really is about how we all use and work with each other for the future, you know. I think the new exchanges over internet have... have really stunted some things but I'm actually making some things happen and some things grow. So I'm actually now keen to actually investigate connectiveness through the online situations and different programs and ways of collaborating... because it's going to be quite some time before large-scale projects and collaborations can come face-to-face, so [at] just a sort of 'interim stage' I'm pretty keen to be involved in, as well, but it's great to meet everyone. Thanks -*[Emma Smith]* Thanks ever so much for that. I should also add that we have had formal apologies from a number of people who aren't here today and just to help even out some of that bias of people who have had - or are connected with- the Liverpool Irish Festival we've got Rachel Ingersoll and also Kelly O'Connor (who is the new cultural lead at the Department For Foreign Affairs); they would both have liked to be here today, but sadly a filming commitment came up for them so they've had to go and do that, but ordinarily they would now like to join this and would be involved. Similarly Julie McNamara -who was at the very first session- has sent apologies due to illness; Adam McGuigan from *wake the beast* would have loved to be here (but has a filming opportunity that's arisen and couldn't miss out on it) and also Gary Dunne from the London Irish Centre; so, there is a wider group around this not to mention the rest of the members who just may not have been able to make it and haven't sent apologies. So, although it's a small cohort today it's quite mobile and it's got some great people in it who can help commission artists, who work with artists and who actually represent the cultural sector here pretty well, so I'm thrilled with who we have got here and glad that there are other people who would like to be involved, too. I think we've got a really nice working group to start today's proceedings with. The first thing I really for us to touch base with was the white paper that was circulated (it was also linked in with the event link if you didn't receive it by email) and I just wondered if there were any major points around that? I'll take grammar points out of the meeting, if that's okay? I've spotted a number, but if there are any major (sort of) content points that anybody would like to pick up on or comments they'd like to make about its direction I'd really like to hear those. Can I throw that back out to you? Do we think it's going in the right direction? [Put y]our hands up for if we think it's going in the right way?

Nods; a few hands, a puzzled face from Lori... so, we think it's going in the right direction. Do we think the questions that we've asked IIB to take to the parliamentary group are the right questions and do we think that the research things, that we've asked that they might explore, are the right exploration points? Ruari, do you want to come in on that and say how that looks, practically, from

your point of view? -*[Ruairi Cullen]* Yeah, sure, sure, Emma... yeah, I think the document is... is looking very promising...

...Very interesting in terms of the questions for the APPG. I think it's a great start, I just... I just think perhaps it's trying to bite off a little bit more than it can chew, with -kind of- six rather (perhaps) long questions and there's, you know, I think the first one... like Irishness/Northern Irish understood and reflected by its national agencies... that's the sort of thing bringing, you know, trying to use the APPG to, kind of, leverage organisations like Arts Council England, that's exactly what we want to be using it for. I was just... just one or two that I wasn't sure if they needed to be in the APPG group; such as the second one. Like, 'why aren't Irish and Northern Irish artists and organisations using and celebrating their national identity more?'. I suppose that it's qualified by 'what are the barriers', but that kind of feels a bit more addressed to artists perhaps, or organisations... I mean, I'm happy to be, you know, happy for you to respond to that, that's just my, kind of, immediate... my immediate thoughts. I'm just looking at them now, hence my kind of slightly slower response; yeah I mean, when I was looking at them earlier that was just one or two of those I was kind of thinking: 'is this really for the APPG' or more, kind of, something for the, kind of, sector to ask itself, yeah.

-*[Emma Smith]* I think that's right and I think that the second one is in there because it's about barriers and about that advocacy that we, as cultural organisations -rather than necessarily as independent artists- might want to help independent artists start claiming and using more often. There had been some conversation, I think... I think in the last session, but it may have been in follow-up feedback, that said we don't use our Irishness because it hasn't helped or actually we found that to be a barrier and so our advocacy around that I think needs to step up, or shift in some way, to help artists understand whether it's a usable "commodity"; almost like 'can we can we capitalise on that?', is it worth doing or is it providing problems? Yeah, yeah, no that's... that's a bit clearer. I think that's how it's landed there, but it might need re-scoping... I wonder what the thing for us to do with this, Ruairi, is... is shape those questions into a way that IIB would ask them and then... -*[Ruairi Cullen]* Yeah, that's it; they're just not really written as in how we would ask them. I think it is my issue. You know, like, the fourth one... the fourth one is "how do we use Brexit to galvanize connections?", I mean that's, again, that's sort of asking the sector itself, so I think they just need... it... just... you just need to kind of have a bit of a reshape of reframing of those, but I think it's... I think it's... they're all relevant stuff and exactly the questions we should be asking... I mean the final one is, perhaps... I was wondering if that's on the scope of the cultural connectedness? Hate crimes are aggregated by,, by offense, you know, why... I'm not going to go on, but...

you know, that just -sort of- feels slightly beyond the scope of this. I don't know if that's... -*[Emma Smith]* You're probably right; [however] it's something that's come through our Festival on a couple of occasions in terms of why people are trying to build up tolerance through cultural connectedness; why they're using arts and culture to try and share their experience and so that's how it has come into our radar. Perhaps it doesn't fit the scope of your questioning, but I think also the reason that some of... sometimes... so for instance... let me rephrase that! Sorry, I've taken myself down a bad path! An issue that we have got is understanding whether or not there is a conflation of 'White Irish' and 'White Britishness', because hate crime isn't split into white crimes and therefore understood in the context of 'White Irish'/'White British'/'White Others' -of which there are many other categories- which I'm not listing now. Actually, it's very difficult to say whether

or not Irish in Britain are facing hate crime and yet an awful lot of the arts and culture work that we're doing is about cultural tolerance, understanding, recognition, awareness raising, so there is a crossover in our work and why we do it. The fact that those can't be justified statistically -we can't make those cases and arguments appropriately- because we don't have the data, [is] how it's come into this document. Whether or not we think it is the question for something else I think is for the for us to answer here. I'm not tied to it specifically, but that is how it came in; does it make sense? -*[Ruairi Cullen]* Yeah I think so; I mean... there's just... there's a lot of... there's a lot to chew on. I think for some of these questions -which isn't necessarily a bad thing- but... but... but it's not a quick win. -No, by any means no... -I mean it's, you know, some of these are really, really big issues that affect the whole Irish community not just... not just the kind of 'arts and cultural sector', but that doesn't mean we shouldn't take them on... anyway, so my kind of main takeaway is (perhaps) just trying kind of pinpoint a bit more some of these questions. What it is we're really asking for and I'm wondering if six is perhaps too... is perhaps too much, but I mean there's lots... there's lots to... to talk about and lots that makes you think about... so it's... I think it's a great start and you're gonna pass... let's pass on somebody else, so I'm not I don't... -*[Emma Smith]* Just so that we don't lose an action from there, I'm taking it that the action is that you/IIB are going to look at those six questions and work out which of the most likely you can take forward, and how, so that we know and just... we will understand what the questions raised there have been (or will be)? -*[Ruairi Cullen]* Yeah, I mean (perhaps) Emma, we could we could have a talk about it outside of this; that might be... that might be useful. -*[Emma Smith]* Yeah. Are there any other comments on the paper as a whole and sort of the suggestions for next steps for the network?

-*[Gerry Molumby]* Can I just say something as well? I'm trying to avoid using the word omission, but I was thinking and I knew... I know I'm new into the forum, but the students and Irish people studying here or Irish students -whatever as they define themselves- and who might be studying the arts/performing arts... whether we could somewhere incorporate them and Irish studies into the forum? For example, I know, last year there was about 10 students at Keele University who happened to do... who had a commonality with Irish dancing and they hosted a feis; I accompanied it for the Irish Post, but they were... they were all either people born in England, or students over from Ireland, who just wanted to put on a feis, so they met their own need. So, I think it's a great resource, maybe to the four or five years that the Irish born students are here, to get involved maybe with Irish culture, Irish studies... is that making sense? -*[Emma Smith]* Yeah, of course; and I think there is a... there is an issue with this document, in that: it is very early days. This is only meeting two and this paper has been created between those two points, so we've found [out] an awful lot -as we've started creating the work- there are certain limitations that come out of it. So, for instance, initially it was like this would be a 'Great British connectedness session'; that's not how funding works and actually the population bases in the four different nations are so different that the experiences are different, so then we had to think -well- 'structurally'. Then, do we need to bring this down a little bit? Do we need to refocus this? So students -at the moment- are aggregated within 'Irish people in Britain' and we haven't done any sort of splitting out of audiences at all...I... I don't think... I think, as the network develops, and we develop (probably) task-groups working in certain areas that things like studentship and seniors (and how we try and integrate those) and how we look at the relevance of our work to those different sections (so who is best to help flag wave for each other to reach the right audiences) will become more apparent, but we're just not that... we're not there yet! -*[Gerry Molumby]* Yeah, I understand that. There's an open invitation for people to join. I probably just, maybe, dream too much, but I'm sure the students -if they want they can join in. -*[Emma Smith]* No, I think there's space and scope in the document for us to start outlining who the Irish in Britain are and what... what groups make up that wider collective here; but -in general- what I'm sensing is: the paper's okay. Actually, the connection and

the collaboration between us *now* is really where this group needs to go and [separately] there is some work with IIB to be done to start thinking about how... how we want to advocate more often -and possibly with better quality- 'nationally'; does that feel right? Yeah, so maybe the development of the paper is, sort of, 'done' and that becomes where we, sort of, go back to -to reconsider things or share with other cultural organisations that want to come on board- and see what we're doing? We're recognising that there is a national under-representation of Irish creativity here and that between us all, we probably need to do a bit more advocacy, to say 'no', 'no, this is a serious part of our population that needs representing that has a distinct and discreet set of experiences, needs, wants, focus that needs to be addressed in arts provision in England' and that's what then we work on as a group? And IIB start talking about with national agencies... Is that right? Am I... does that feel like the right direction?

So, in that then, the next cultural connectedness session should really be about artists being able to talk about their work and commissioners talking about what they need, so that we can start doing some pathfinding between artists and organisations. Again, is that/do we feel like that's going in the right direction?

[NOISE] Has any/does anybody want to talk about what work they have now that they would like to share with us then?

I can kick off if... if not?

So, for instance -I will come to you in one moment Terry, as your hand went up- I'll just let you know that we worked on "exchange" as a theme last year, but -of course- we only really got to develop about half a festival in terms of the scope and scale that we would ordinarily work on. And, while we would ordinarily move the theme annually, actually -at board level- we had a discussion about it to say 'there's still so much we can explore here' and 'that we can use to take the story from this year into next year' and help explore things further; pull strands out more; tell more artist stories and work 'physically' -we hope- with artists that we couldn't do that with this year, so we don't lose those connections. We can explore those exchanges more richly, so that's kind of the direction that we're taking this year. If that... if any of the artists that are here think "I've got work on exchange that'd be really good", I would love for you to contact me with project ideas so that we can start thinking about how that's funded; what we can do and how we explore that further with you, so that's me. Terry, I'm going to pass to you now...

-*[Terry Clarke-Coyne]* Thanks a lot. I'll make up something to say now because I was waving goodbye to John, not waving to be... to have attention but... but that is completely fine. Yeah, I've got a couple of points really; one coming from the paper. Just as we were skimming through it as you were talking again and -I'm... I'm... currently- I'm in the middle of a text actually (or a message) to a radio station; we've asked about musicians contacting them to talk about projects and music going on in in the North West, particularly in the Wales area, where I am and I realised that I... as I was texting this (I'm halfway through it) and then, obviously, I joined the meeting, I came across the... an age-old niggle in the back of my brain, almost an embarrassment, for

introducing myself as being an Irish musician. I've come across this oh many, many, nu.... so many numerous times particularly across the British

side of music, where you -the Irish side of it- people's psyche from outside with the Irish diaspora tends to slot you into the pigeon holes of 'oh it's Riverdance' or 'oh it's Paddy/Paddy Irish band' in a pub'; 'oh, it's the, you know, it's... it's...' a difficult thing to overcome sometimes, when you're introducing yourself cold to a new person. And it shouldn't be there, but there's right in the back of the brainless... I don't think 'oh this Paddy-fella, you know, owned this Irish stuff' and it's (we're) so prevalent in the... in the communities and an amount of, you know, front... front-of-house-type music that is all around the country, you know, in every genre and arts in particular. [And] it shouldn't be there, so this white paper, you know, sort of -from my point- it starts to address a wider issue of acceptance and discrimination, which as you know, goes back, you know. I've been brought up in an Irish community, as most of you know; you know, from childhood and my dad... through childhood... and it... it was very natural within that community, but outside of it I've always felt a bit of a stranger in in my own land. And unfortunately, sometimes made to feel a stranger in Ireland as well, from/for being another nationality, bringing it to Ireland, so those things sort of come... sorry... that... that was a side thing... just come to me as I was reading the other thing really is... I've found that connecting... there's one there about Brexit and also about Europe. I've worked across Europe for the whole of my... you know, since I was 14, in groups right throughout my life. I've traveled Europe and... and further... and I've never had to apologise and I've always actually been sought after or, you know, revered. 'You're playing the Irish stuff'/'You're playing the folk stuff', and it really is sought after and given the same status across most of, you know, we'll talk... your most European countries I've been to, which is most of the 27. I've never ever felt that I'm bringing this Irish or 'Paddy music' or whatever. People sometimes associated to... but in Britain... to do it now that you know... so... so... to have a project to bring forward, I have many, many ideas. Most of them stay shelved because of that particular situation; nowhere to take it, but it would be treated with the brevity, levity and, you know, equality that I'd be looking for, so I'll leave them behind and often now you start... -*[Emma Smith]* For my own... can I drill into that a little bit? You said you felt that in Britain/all over Britain or England specifically? -*[Terry Clarke-Coyne]* England specifically because, obviously, I've got Celticness in Wales -where I feel very happy- although, you know, I don't have a place... but there are lots of Irish musicians in Wales; they're trying to grow a Welsh cultural music... and I... I haven't delved into that because it's not quite the stage where I wanted to go in with it, at the level and... but it doesn't mean I don't... and I want to support it. I go to festivals. Lots of my local friends are all Welsh musicians and they're great people, great musicians and you know it's... it never feels strange, apart from when I'm applying for things in England... and it used to, but the... the Irish Festival, you know, as many of the, you know, the Cultural Centre and, you know, Birmingham, London, Manchester, you know... you'll have come across all of this, I'm sure, over the years ; particularly those of us of an older generation, who've had to, sort of, struggle to put things together and bring it into the mainstream... our... even [in] our local communities and have it accepted and sometimes -your last statement- about, you know, the... the, sort of, hate campaigns and whatever, you know, there's been vitriol, there's been negativity, there's been real battles. Values will overcome so that, you know, this is the great step forward, for me, well... what the actual 'meat on the bones', how do we put some projects together, some collaborations together; that really means something and can be the evidence block for the Irish In Britain, whatever, to take forward and say "this type of thing can happen when you give it a place to push". -*[Emma Smith]* I completely agree and we have to/the Festival has to recognise that -as a Festival- we only, sort of, pop-up -really- once a year and on a couple of celebration days, despite the fact our work is year-round, but it means that we're only a highlight point in that work (which is great and it isn't a nothing; it's definitely a something!). We're trying to make sure that

we're doing other work now that addresses Irish influence and looks at the positivity of that to start breaking down 'what'/'how'. That's something that you can just pick on or eradicate, because -I mean, particularly here- it's so entrenched in the very fabric of the city. You know the curb stones at the docks are made of granite from Newry; the hands that built the docks were predominantly (or had an awful lot of) Irish and Northern Irish helpers, so -you know- it's literally part of the fabric and we're hoping that by trying to remind people of that on the day-to-day basis, as well as the high point of the Festival, that suddenly 'that' becomes something that you can't just dismiss. [From] that we start unpicking some of those overt, bizarre assumptions that have just become embedded and entrenched like 'Paddy music' or, you know, jokes about an Irishman, a Scotsman and a... because they're never good; they're not helpful, yet they sort of perpetuate these, like, microaggression level nationalisms and poor thought; lazy thought. So we're trying to address those by doing positive work and reinforcing positivity all the way through; trying to create as many opportunities where we can do that using Irish artists or using Irish diaspora artists and Liverpool born Irish people's work is part... is all part of that celebrating how that works; we're really keen to meet and work with new artists as well and think about how we bring those things together to dovetail those messages, but actually this is an incredible creative melting pot that brings ever such a lot to not just the Irish of the city, but everyone [who] can share in that and learn from it/learn about it, so I think there's so much that we can do -as a collective- to really help those stories along. We may not even talk about the hate crime aspects of it all, the negative tranches of that; it's all positive reinforcement by having it there at all, but that's why it needs funding; that's why it needs advocacy and representation and why we need to make sure that we are being given the opportunity to share opportunities. I think... I think that's where we're trying to go... it feels as though other groups in here are doing the same. I'm getting positive nods from Jennifer and Win. As we didn't see you at the beginning of the session, Win works with Irish Community Care in Liverpool, and across the North West; Win, I wonder if you would like to say anything? -*[Win Lawlor]* Yeah, thank you very much. Hi everybody. I'm... I'm really sorry, yes... I've... I've been desperately trying to get in and pressing all kinds of things and then realized that there was actually a Zoom code, so apologies; it took me half-an-hour nearly to work that one out, so I'm... I'm... I'm just an idiot that come off another meeting, so I was, like, trying to rush to get in. I really, really welcome the white paper. I think it's... it's... it's beyond time that we... we were doing this work, so thank you to Irish In Britain. I think that's really important to say; thank you for the Festival to, you know, for... for allowing this space, because I think these conversations, you know, that stuff that you've been talking about Terry, right there, is so many of our community's experiences and, you know, Dara O'Brien says "we're all right to be Irish when we're in our place" and... and I think that's the kind of scenario that we've... we... experienced still in a lot of the different areas where we dare to step out of our place. And, you know, I think one of the places that we have a transitional space -that we can have conversations that are non-threatening- is around arts and music, because in some sense... actually, Terry, simply 'because' people see us as the... the 'fiddle-dee-dee'/'the Irish music'/'oh that's what...', you know, "it's great, we'll go along" and "IrishFest will be full of music"... it is, but if we use that as a starting point to have really interesting and challenging conversations, in really safe and open places... I would go further, actually, because one of the things that I find, as a community worker, is that -and I wanted to bring this up, so I'm really glad (I think it contextually fits here)- is the fact that we've got a lot of kind of, you know, there's Celtists, there's the Irish dancing groups, there's some there's some really great formal cultural spaces, where we can be, [but] we work with people who still don't even feel comfortable being in there sometimes and don't have the same opportunities to be in there -in those spaces- you know... Having your mummy pay regular fees for your dancing classes is beyond a lot of our service users, but -at the same time- what they need is bases and places where they can still express their culture. I think we've got a lot of people who lose out and miss out because they don't have those spaces outside of the formalised structures of those groups and I

applaud the Festival for being, increasingly, one of those spaces that allows voices that sit outside that kind of mainstream Irishness, if you like, for being for, you know, opening up. Look at the conversations we had last year, you know, sorry; the year before last, about -you know... you know- Chinese Irish, Black Irish... all of those kind of conversations and those spaces where we found affinity; where we found partnership; where we found like-mindedness and likeness of experiences and I think that's really important going forward for... for... Liverpool and for... for... the... the North West. Actually, I think there's this similarity of experiences in Manchester, too... I just applaud the fact that this is happening and we're having these conversations, because I really do think that that's vital for our communities -and for us to be drawing the community into these conversations and these spaces- over the next couple of -you know, kind of- months in the development of projects, so I would ask you, if you are writing stuff, and you are thinking of stuff, think beyond the boundaries. You know, we... we have access... we've done some of the most amazing photography work with our Traveller women, which, you know, was... was internationally recognised as part of the Festival three years ago, so that's... they're the kind of things that the Festival's doing and it's opening up those dialogues and conversations. -*[Emma Smith]* I think you're right, how do we keep it going for the rest of the year? That's the question, really, isn't it? For all of us? And how do we sustain the energy and the drivers that are pushing the Festival's boundaries? How do we keep pushing those for the rest of the year as a, you know, across the whole lot of us? And it's that it's that Traveller project -in some ways- that spurs me on for this sort of cultural connectedness, because what that needs is multi-year support not project support. We haven't been able to get back and work with that community properly since that event, which I'm gutted about, because we just haven't had the project funds to keep doing it and you can't just keep reintroducing yourself. So, Win, I hope you know I'm still working on that, in the back of my head; that we... we still need to do more with that and grow that project and do something that spans years and in these sorts of things -and in those hopes and aspirations- is, kind of, where I hope the Cultural Connectedness Exchange helps us build bigger, better projects -for longer- and so thank you ever so much for bringing that up. The dual-heritage work that Win mentioned there is also a feeder for this and part of that stuff around hate crime that we were talking about... that Irish and black... if you [Google] Black Irish it's all about white people, so where are Black people in that? We've had big conversations around that. Our Chinese Irish community in Liverpool have been/have removed themselves from society in Covid and had an awful lot of hate crime faced at them which means that our Chinese Irish community members have also removed themselves and withdrawn, so we're trying really hard to work with them, but with reduced capacity and people not recognising that resources are needed in those areas... We need artists to work in those areas with cultural specificity and the right touch to make those things important, resonant and meaningful, so hopefully those sorts of conversations and shared experiences -across the country- here, might help with that and understanding... getting a barometer for what those communities are facing across the country, because the Liverpool experience may not be the London experience, may not be the Birmingham experience either, and certainly for our friends who are in Ireland that may not be an issue there either, so -sort of- trying to think through some of those things here feels important.

They're all areas of work that we are working on. If there's an independent artist in this group [who has] ideas around that I'm open to that; I suspect others here are, too. Jennifer, do you want to say anything about Birmingham's Irish Centre and points of work and crossover that are happening here? -*[Jennifer Bennett]* Oh thanks, Emma. I mean, at the moment, it's quite a small... this is kind of, really... Well, it's really insightful for me because it... I mean obviously, at the moment with the pandemic, everything's been put online, but it's because I'm fairly new to the role here -we're quite a small cultural department here- but it's finding these issues to target in specific ways that

are targeted and not... not trying to do it as a generalised approach and then having to redo that again. Like you say, sort of, we revisiting that again, so it is really insightful. I mean, yeah, it's... I think... but what we do, obviously, it's... we're trying to, during the pandemic, trying to build a lot of relationships with these artists. Like there was one, for example, I met yesterday. He was a... he's an author who was releasing his book in February. It's called 'Under The Bridge' by Jack Byrne (really, really lovely man), but he's trying to get... we had a conversation and an interview on Zoom yesterday about similar topics to what we're discussing today and... and how it's... it's... it's developed over time and evolved the sort of situations that artists are facing, but it's still an ongoing thing, so it needs to have constant work with getting things out there, promoting and, sort of, combating that force that they're feeling at the moment. I mean similar things to that is what we're doing at the moment, but obviously we'd like to... which is great that we're on here as well and, sort of, connecting because then sharing ideas and working on, like, bigger and better projects for us all and everything. So sorry, I'm rambling... *[Emma Smith]* That's okay; [in] these early sessions I think have to have and allow for a little bit of this free-form and us finding our feet and finding out where these things dovetail; we've got things that we can bring to each other to collaborate over... so I think... it might be a bit woolly at the minute, but I think we've, kind of, got to get through some of that so that we can start actually fostering and forging these connections. *[Agreement]* I hope people agree and can, sort of, manage to get through a few sessions before doing it, but -so for instance- we've got a working roster of around 100 artists that we speak to annually, so if you were putting on a festival and we were putting on a Festival there's a hundred people -already there- where we can make connections and just by knowing about one another, knowing each other's faces, being able to pick up the phone or drop an email over going: 'do you know somebody who works in dual-heritage lives in Wexford?', we can go: 'yeah' or 'Not in Wexford, but in...you know'. That we can have that relationship I think is... is going to start being ever more important for us - *[Jennifer Bennett]* Absolutely, and meeting the needs, as sort, of as a diaspora in whole *[Emma Smith]* And hearing... and hearing from artists -here- about what they're facing, but the coal face of creativity in... in England or in Ireland and figuring out how we work through that -*[Jennifer Bennett] Yes* -*[Emma Smith]* What's interesting to them or what's... what's a hardship for them? So that we, as organisers, commissioners or collaborators can figure out ways to plug gaps and help bring people up... *[Jennifer Bennett]* and meet the needs of their yeah that makes sense that makes sense *[Emma Smith]* Jean, I'd love to pass to you

-*[Jean Maskell]* Yeah it's just something that just come to mind [that] I was thinking about this morning, which was about Liverpool Biennial, which is, you know, it's a huge worldwide event of people coming from all over the world to do arts and I was wondering how many... I mean, I find it quite difficult as a local person to access the Biennial, but I was just wondering how many Irish artists are involved in Liverpool Biennial? *[Emma Smith]* Well, great question. The Liverpool Biennial has been notoriously difficult to penetrate, primarily because -over the last few years- the curatorship hasn't been done from here; they've had international curators who take a theme and curate to that theme and therefore the national... the nationality of the artists isn't a primary thought for them; although sometimes it is around prestige or about breaking a new talent so... I don't know the answer to that. What I can say is I'm finally... for the first time... the Irish Festival is doing some work with them so I may, as the months go by, unpick some of that and start saying 'well, actually, what about an Irish pavilion at the Liverpool Biennial?' and that's what I've got in my head to, sort of, go forward with ideas for that; so: I don't have the answer. I will work on it. -*[Jean Maskell]* Yeah, I suppose that the point I was thinking about was about... I agree with what Terry said before. And it's sort of strange, isn't it, that there's a... a level of ignorance about a lot of Irish arts and what Irish artists are doing. I'm involved in Ceramics Ireland and a lot of ceramicists, here,

say 'well, why are you involved in that?', you know, 'why aren't you in London?', sort of thing, actually and I always say: 'well, actually, the quality of modern ceramics is higher in Ireland than it is in England' and you go 'oh!'. What is it? You know, like, and there's an education job there that we need to do to get people on onto that agenda, I think. -*[Emma Smith]* In the first session of this- we were talking about how we try and get other art mediums to receive the same sort of acceptance as Irish literature does in England and you're absolutely right about ceramics in Ireland and we've been working with Design Council... the Design And Crafts Council Of Ireland and actually we've ended up picking two ceramicists in a row for exhibits in the Liverpool Festival, because it's just been so good; so you are absolutely right. We're trying to figure out ways of doing that and I think this collective advocacy is part of that, because I don't think we've all joined forces before and really helped [beat a path] for each other -and the amount of work that we are doing- so we're only hitting smaller pockets, which means we're not getting any sort of national attraction and I think that's what we need to start doing. That and I think there is work to be done around saying 'yes, there is this brilliant traditional Irish work' and there is also 'brilliant contemporary practice being forged here' so I think both aspects of that -and the fusion aspects of that- need celebrating and... and as you say we need to educate people around that. There's ever such a lot to be done. It's great; it's exciting; it means there's space for us and we we've got to carve out a market but I think doing that collectively and using the sort of collective power that we have got as a network is the way to start championing those things.

-*[Jean Maskell]* Yeah, that's great. -*[Emma Smith]* Do you want to talk a bit about your practice and what... what you do Jean?

-*[Jean Maskell]* I tend to be a bit of a jack of all trades, because I do... I do writing and ceramics and art. I tend to work on a lot of Irish themes and put exhibitions together and stuff, but particularly the ceramics, you know, having exhibited with Ceramics Ireland in... in Dublin and, like I say, I just think the quality the Irish arts is... is there and there's so much going on, you know, that people just don't know about and... I don't know; I think a lot of things are coming together. Brexit's coming together, isn't it? And there's been a Brexit has also shown what the level of ignorance that there is between the countries, as well, sadly... so yeah there's a lot of work to do. *[Emma Smith]* I think you're right about it flagging the ignorance... I think that's a good thing though, long term, because it means we now know what the battle is, where before we didn't know and it was, sort of, hidden behind, you know, sort of 'smoke and mirrors' of assumptions and of ... assuming people knew better and -of course- actually, what we found, is a lot of people don't and didn't. So that re-education now can start, because we know what we're tackling. So I think that although it's horrible and it's a bit like having to clean the garage out (you've got to take everything out, put it on the driveway, figure out what it is you need; figure out what's good, what's broken, what has to go and then restack it)... I think that's, kind of, where we are and that's really useful though... because now, if Birmingham need a ceramicist there's a direct link! Patrick, would you like to say more about Comhaltas and what it's doing and who... who you might like to work with or particular areas of work you really hope to develop? -*[Patrick Morrison]* Yeah, if it's... I've got... I've just been, obviously, listening and... and picking up from what Terry said and what Jean's... some things you said... I've got two questions, if that's all right? Yeah, one of them - specifically for the artists and the practitioners here- as Terry kind of talked about, traditional Irish music is... it's essentially... it's... traditional 'artist music people' will put that in a box... largely depending on whether they like it or not but it's quite specifically Irish. I'm looking at listening to other people here, writing theatre, ceramics, art, sculpture... these aren't as intrinsically Irish; it's not in the title, if you like. So, I'm just interested to know from the artists how they might/whether

they change their approach and whether they emphasise or promote the Irishness of either themselves or the work? Like John used the phrase -early on, at the beginning of ...- I think he said 'Irish inspired art or Irish or art from an Irish...' and how... so I'm interested to know how individual artists/practitioners actually promote themselves and their work and where they see that Irishness as being an advantage or a disadvantage. And- whether, I think as maybe the case that... that changes depending on who you're presenting to or... or what audience you're looking for? So, that's one thing I'd like to add, be tested, to know. And the second one, I think, is more to towards the Irish Centres or the... the... the places the festivals/the people who put this stuff out there - and obviously we're talking here to people who I... don't really work to Irish audiences and predominantly put on Irish arts for Irish audiences but again is... is there in that, some kind of suggestion that Irish arts is 'better' than non-Irish arts or is there... is there... has anyone thought about whether we put on non-Irish arts? English-based arts, for example, for Irish audiences? There's nothing to say that Irish audiences; the people/Irish people in Britain... we like 'non-Irish' arts as well. We like all sorts of arts, but does that factor into the thinking of the Irish centres? Do they put on, I don't know, North African music, because Irish people in their area like North African music? Or, is their... their cultural remit just to put on Irish arts or Irish generated Irish-themed activities, so... I don't know if that's helpful. There's two questions there. I gambled a bit, but I'll throw that open to people.

-*[Emma Smith]* I mean I can answer from an organisational point of view what our/how we've considered our remit, which is: no, I don't tend to put on non-Irish linked work for our audiences, but I recognise that our audiences are 80% local and that within that 80% locality probably, 50% of them have an Irish connection, but that means that we are already showing Irish work to non-Irish people so our remit, at Liverpool Irish Festival, is to celebrate Irish creativity, not as 'better' than other cultural creativity, but as representative of audiences who need representation, because - actually- it's underrepresented in England. -*[Patrick Morrison]* So that's exactly the answer I was expecting, but... so... that's putting the emphasis on the... the artistic delivery rather than the audience, if you like, because you're... you're putting... I... you're putting the Irish arts first and you're putting it out to any audience -Irish or otherwise- opposed to focusing on an Irish audience and providing content for them? -*[Emma Smith]* To an extent, yes; there is hope that... that is - actually- events attract Irish audiences and non-Irish audiences, but actually there's quite a big crossover in the middle where you approach both, so I think there is an understanding that non-Irish people will 'benefit' from that (which is really arrogant); what I mean is: should be able to enjoy and participate as much as somebody who already knows that sort of work and enjoys engaging in it and has participated in it all their life... but you're right; we... I mean, today I had a text message from Morocco: 'would you put this on?' it's like... well, actually... it's not really an arena... that's not what... that's not where our funding comes in [from or] for bringing in that kind of work for an Irish audience in Liverpool, so -from our point of view- no we don't really commission non-Irish work to celebrate with an Irish audience, specifically as part of our Festival. Yeah... but I'm really interested to hear from others and I'm very keen still to hear from artists about whether or not they use their Irishness as a positive or whether they found it to be a barrier...

Terry? -*[Gerry Molumby]* Okay yeah, I... I can break that down even further, just following on from what Patrick said. When I've been producing plays over the years -especially when it started out, first in the 90s- and our audiences were North London audiences... and we used to take them around the country to our centres, etc., and... but I... I invariably had to look at a play like 'The Hostage' and a John B Keane play, something... a tragi-comedy rather than... even though I loved the Brian Friel plays, so -back to reading your audiences- if you're going to an Irish centre with a

predominantly Irish-born audience there, who emigrated, that... you have to know your audience, but we went to the root of giving them what they like, frankly. So, but... all our performances were open to everybody, but that's my contribution to that aspect. -*[Emma Smith]* Anybody else?

I'm going to go to Jean and then to Terry.

[Jean Maskell] I don't... well... what Patrick said was such a big question I don't quite know how to answer it; I don't think I can, but, I just thought I'd give the example of some of the work that I did do, because one of the things that I'm involved in is ship builds... well ceramics around shipbuilding, believe it or not! And I also do work to do with women, social justice, history and mythology, but just taking shipbuilding, for example, I did an exhibition in Liverpool around the Cunard and the Three Queens, which was to do about construction, 1930s ships (the classic ships) to do with Liverpool, which was fine. That was okay, but then, when I was in contact with people in Wexford and they were doing an exhibition to do with 'work' and they asked me to take the shipbuilding stuff to Wexford. I was a bit astonished, at first, because I thought 'why would anyone in Wexford really want to know anything about Liverpool shipbuilding?', because I in my head it was quite -sort of- a specialist thing, but actually -because it was abstract work around shipbuilding- they absolutely... they loved it and it was interesting talking to people who had an interest -just in ships- with obviously Wexford being a port and a harbour and everything -and all the fishing boats and everything- and the mechanics of ships are the same, aren't they? No matter what ships they are, so it wasn't... that wasn't like to do with Irishness that was just to do with sort of taking something and bringing it into a different culture, but it was still relevant. I don't know whether I really explain that properly.

-*[Emma Smith]* I think there is something about not... not thinking you know it all; that -actually- somewhere that's landlocked might have lots of interest in water *because* they don't have access to water. Yeah, I think there is quite often something like that... we can think about Patrick's point about 'why aren't we programming non-Irish work for Irish audiences'? ...that... it's a difficult one to get around, but there might be some real sense in thinking through that and if... yeah... if it wasn't Irish, what should it be? -*[Jean Maskell]* Yeah, by the same token I mean I would... the Irish work that I do in in Liverpool and in Birkenhead -to do with Irish history -say around 1916, stuff like that- and people wouldn't have known about those sorts of things -and the storytelling around that- connected and combining it with art, you know; there's a lot of interest there again, from people, I suppose I'm coming back to the education thing again a bit now.

-*[Emma Smith]* Would anybody else like to pick up on any points from Patrick about programming or around barrie... -come to you in two ticks then William- about barriers or positivity to using your Irishness?... William first... -*[William Foote]* Sure; just to answer the programming question, mainly... Well, I mean, we program -or in the good old days we programmed- a year-long, you know, centre that was full of everything we could possibly get our hands on in Irish culture. That wasn't to say that we disregarded things that maybe didn't scream 'Irishness', you know, you... we... we... we took in every submission, every project that we had and we chatted about it and felt if it was right to the basis of the program. A lot... a lot of what we did debate is actually the... the differences, actually, in Irish culture; even in just traditional music. Who is a purist and who's a new form? And the fact that there's a split, in an audience, there that people wouldn't go

see some people/will only go see pure... some people will only go see modern trad and, you know, there's only so many days in the calendar, as well, to try and get the best of/for your audience, when you are specifically funded to showcase the best of Irish talent; but we've had events here, you know, that are Caribbean nights with Irish, you know, collaborations in that, because also Hammersmith is a multi-cultural, ethnical area where, you know, it was in the 60s and 70s... very much, very Irish and that percentage has... has dropped, but we do a lot of community work to help the... the people around that, so I would... I would say when it comes to programming the... the... the Irishness of it is... is definitely integral to us setting or achieving our goal each year... but I don't think it's... it doesn't cause us to throw projects that don't feel Irish out, when they're submitted to us, because we are an arts and culture centre and we... we want to showcase arts and culture, but 90 to 95% of everything we do here will definitely be pretty Irish on the tin, I would say, in... in that sense... but, you know, we've... we've taken projects here that, you know, maybe off the cuff you wouldn't recognise would be Irish, you know. We've had movie screenings here; we screened 'Three Billboards outside Ebbing Missouri' and for, when it came out as well, because of the flavour, but that was a movie set in Alabama. I got more... Missouri! It's in the title! Whoops. So, you know, there's... there's what culture it is to people and... and what it means to be Irish is different things and we're seeing that, as well, across the... the... the pandemic, you know. People are dipping into more outputs than they've... they've ever thought. We've had people write poetry for the first time ever, for us, that -you know- never would have written poetry before. People who have expressed interest in... in... in literature when they were only fans of music before, because they have a lot more free time and they don't seem as focused. So, I think, yeah, I... I would... I would say to maybe bring it back to the question is 'yes' we still programmed to have an Irish program, but 'yes' it's... it's as... as times change, arts centres have to be aware of the changes happening around them as well or you do lose touch with your goal in your community. -*[Emma Smith]* And I think there's something else in there that you said, that was interesting, that was there's only so many days in the calendar, so that can also limit what you can... what you feel you can do -to be truly representative- or... or do all of that other work that's also great but not necessarily specifically in your mission. You know we've got 10 days a year to program, really,

that's not enough time as it is! I'm guessing that other places find that and... and it will be different between venue-based organizations and non-venue-based organisations like us. Would anybody else like to say anything about their artistic practice?

-*[William Foote]* Can I mention... I just wanted to mention a few avenues that we have, sort of, put here and we're always looking for collaboration on at the Irish Cultural Centre, since the pandemic has began. We've basically been closed, to the general public since the... the 16th of March. We have a fantastic art centre here. It's a new build; it's, you know, it's... it's state of the art and everything, but now we're having to make changes in it that we didn't think we'd ever have to do. We're basically building an infrastructure here that... it means that -hopefully- regardless of what tiers come in, you know, we'll still be able to showcase arts; so we're trying to keep as many artists in work as possible, but it's not really happening at the minute. We have put in place sort of three avenues... we sort of do three avenues in our normal job. We do culture, community and education. So on the culture side, we have a digital channel that we launched back in April called 'ICC Digital' and we've done a couple of specific projects over that; that is a channel base, too, showcasing the best of Irish art; first generation, second generation, third generation, shadow diasporic -all that, sort of, feeling... that if... if people want to submit an... or... or be considered to be showcased on it you can write to write to us and say 'oh can I send you some stuff' and we might ask you to record something for us. Over the summer we did a project with our local Irish,

second generation, third generation... an upcoming sort of Celtic talent called the 'ICC Sessions', where we brought them into a Covid-secure location and filmed them doing 20-30 minutes. That whole series is online for you to watch, as well, free of charge. We've also done a literary festival, which has people like Roddy Doyle, Emma Donoghue, John Banville... all talking about their work; that's all online, as well, free to watch and share and spread the word. It's all there, but we're still taking submissions for home concerts. At this minute no recording in the centre is happening, because I think Hammersmith has one in 22 people has it, as a statistic, or something like that. So nobody's coming in to work here until that rises a bit... but we're still we're taking in. It doesn't mean that the culture is stopping. Our education program is all online. We do music classes, we do Irish language classes, we do poetry classes and we take submissions from academics who might want to propose short courses and teach, as well, so we've... we've... Had/seen an increase in people joining us on education and then, the last one, we we've done is: we've... we've done a community project called 'The Culture Hotline', where we've taken students -or out of work artists- and got them to play an afternoon concert over the phone, which can be dialled in from anywhere across the UK. It's a free phone number and you can listen and chat with artists, who maybe are doing a harp recital or an Irish sing-along, and we'll also have top tips for how to beat lockdowns on it, where there's a slight welfare aspect to it, as well, but it's... to be, sort of, break up that monotony that comes with lockdown, especially in our vulnerable and elders and give them a place to chat and break that isolation and loneliness, as well, so those three, sort of, strands are... they haven't disappeared from the Irish Culture Centre in Hammersmith and we're always looking to collaborate as much as we can at any of those three strands. So, if anybody is interested in working with us or has ideas for moving things forward always feel free to drop me an email.

-*[Emma Smith]* Has anybody else got anything that they would like to say about their work or barriers or positivity about their Irishness?

Terry?

-*[Terry Clarke-Coyne]* Hi, yeah, probably...

Hello, yeah... taking on Patrick's two points and a third point. I'll start with the third; the style of music I play is obviously... If people don't know, I'm playing traditional music, but I've had a lifelong passion since... since a child. I started my whistle playing off, unbelievably, by playing along to the TV... the test card as the first whistles I ever played and I... I learned -for quite a long time- before I ever got cottoned on to traditional music, because I didn't know what it was. My dad didn't take me till I was 12 to the Irish Centre, but I was playing whistle for about three years. I only ever played along with the test card; so -sorry, for the young ones, the test card was when the telly used to finish overnight and it used to just put music on in the background- so I'd be listening to... Late At Night, because my dad would be out playing music till one in the morning my mum would be in bed and... and I'd be sitting there at the telly -playing along- and I'd be playing every kind of music imaginable, really; new, classical and, you know, pop and just... all... whatever it was on really. And the reason for saying that is: it gave me/it's given me a lifelong interest in other music and it deepened into world-music, really, in the end and I've been very fortunate. I've travelled all over the world and I've played with lots of great artists from other cultures particularly African and Chinese; Japanese and even through some of the Baltics and so there's been a... there's, you know, there's

been a development in... in understanding of quite a few musicians on [[INTERFERENCE]] as to where Irish music sits in world-music and I think it sits very, very well and equally with all other types of world music. It isn't seen as a relation; if I met... for many it's seen as, like, at the pinnacle of where to get to, particularly musicianship and quality of group... group work; that's been done, which isn't a, sort of, very cultural as Ruairi said, sorry, not really as... Will... Willie said... the factions can be totally trad people and I know loads of those... and... who will go to trad concerts and go to trad sessions and listen to trad music and come to listen to me and follow me; but if I get involved in anything else, they... it just doesn't pique their interest, but I have almost as large a number of people, that I know have come across, who... who would dip into and would support a massive range, you know. By 'massive range', I mean experimental range even of other ways of bringing in our Irish culture music and... and maybe other arts in, with other art forms, possibly from other places around the world. So I'm thinking of the likes of, you know, certainly the... Hammersmith and that I would have expected, you know, the likes of Jiggy or Afro Celt Sound System, you know, the beat traddies who would go to that type of concert, but some that wouldn't, because it's too jazzy. Whereas, you know, it's a fantastic culture; you've got Salsa Chaotica with, you know, Amy Cohen on banjo up in Edinburgh; you know, a great fusion of salsa and... and Irish and Scottish. So, it has been done, it does work and actually some of the biggest bands on [at] the big festivals have that sort of approach. It isn't 'we are just this nation' and 'we do that'; for a lot of them it includes a very Celtic element, rather than someone will say 'Irish' all the time. But certainly, you know, Breton music is massive across the continent, as well, as Irish probably as equal as Irish now, and then some of the more traditional French music, as well, so -with that in mind- the only reason I'm saying is that there are audiences for the... the organisations who will only provide content for that Irish audience and that will never change until unfortunately... we have to lose some money on some gigs. And I know where our friends Simon Glinn used to do it at the at the Philharmonic where he put Status Quo on the bill one week to fill every seat and the organisation would make some money, so he could put an African band on the following week and lose a shirt, you know, so that would allow audiences -which would build over time- it's a... it's a long-term drip process and you just, you know, as Patrick was asking, you you've got to

bite the bullet and be brave and I know finance literally is everything for some people. Their organisation relies on the people to turn up, bar takings, food, ticket money, that type of thing, but -you know- if there was a 'buy monthly program', which... which says 'try this', you know, it's a big gamble whether we can get, you know, uh some of the outside funding for... what... I don't know, but we're not going to break this mould until there's some brave people out there to... to make those steps, because it still sometimes feels like it hasn't moved for me, since I was a child, in lots of ways. It has, but in lots of ways it hasn't, so -you know- it's been a slow... a slow crawl, rather than a nice leap. So, I've tried to encapsulate Patrick's two... two questions there, but also from my own experience: there is audience, certainly if I go to -you know- a literally... an African night team only [[COULDN'T HEAR]] at the Irish at the Philharmonic a few years ago, you know, a quarter of that audience were from the Irish Festival, because they've been told about it: "come and hear this guy, he's about the best of another traditional instruments on the planet and they blow your socks off' and they bought the albums and they've gone to see... Jeff Lowe's another great recorder player; they'll be now listening to Seto Keiko and, you know, with Catherine Finch, there, so -you know- this... these audiences have been built by other people and it... but it has to be done. It has to be put on, so -yeah- I suppose that's a summary of what's exploding in me brain at the moment

-*[Emma Smith]* Thank you... -*[Win Lawlor]* Can I come in on that, sorry? I'm absolutely excited by these... that... those ideas, Terry. I think... I think going back to Patrick's question is, you know,

Irish music for an Irish audience. I think the core of that question is: 'who are Irish people now?', you know, we're working with Arabic Irish people, both who've come over to Ireland as asylum seekers and come here as students, who were born as second gen Arabic communities in Ireland, you know. We're working with Black people who were born in Ireland and have come here as students, or come here to work, so the question of 'who' is Irish I think is changing the traditional kind of, you know, 60+ that... that fill a group... you know, fill a place on a Saturday night in a hall, you know, at an Irish centre. There's... there's... there's a... a little stalwart, core group there, but those people are becoming more and more frail; they're becoming less likely to go out in the dark (we know because we have to put a lot of our events on in the afternoon to get people and capture people coming... coming out. So, I think we... we need to shift, as you said; I mean -I wanted to hug you Terry, when you said it hasn't changed- I mean, I was a kid going the Irish centre. I was a kid going, doing the Irish dancing in... in Rock Ferry, you know. Maureen Bulger and... and it was like "oh, you still got the finger marks on the back of your arm, Terry?" I do ask everybody that...! Yeah, so what we've got is we have... and I think -sometimes because we're from the community- our own perceptions of who the Irish community are confined and controlled by our expectations and -I think you're right- we need to step outside of that, both as providers of... of, you know, arts and... and opportunities... we need to think bigger than that; we need to, kind of, go out there and do a bit of scoping really and find out: 'what is the interest if we put on...'. I know we did through the... and I think you know, again coming back to the Irish Festival's position as a facilitator... and a... a kind of what's the word? Not an agitator, but it is almost that kind of -you know- stirring things up a little bit? Is, we... we did... Irish... we worked through the Irish Centre with Irish kids. We had our Irish Travellers and the Liverpool Arabic Centre Arabic kids the Yemeni kids, all come together. Oh my word, I'd love some money to do some more of that stuff again; the energy, the power... and it was the music and the food that brought them together and the synergy particularly between the Traveller and the Yemeni kids because the cultures... and that's still only the one positive conversation I've ever had about 'Big Fat Gypsy Wedding' where a Yemeni service group turned around and went "oh my god, we finally found another community just like us!"; they were absolutely made up and I think that's what we need to go for; that synergy, that kind of dynamism, that energy that comes when you bring the unexpected together and actually realise, you know... You only have to look at the music annotation and the notation in... in Arabic music, you know, look at... look at the... look at the pipes and the... the instruments that are played in Turkish and Arabic music; there is such a similarity already and I think bringing that together and... and bringing people who are... are doing that work together and exploring that in a in a space that challenges everybody, actually (not just Irish people), around what is Irishness, but what is -you know- who... who are our neighbours? Who are our partners? Who actually lives in this city, with us, that we don't talk to because we... we only stay in our little, you know, Irish social groups? Or, you know, we... we don't get out apart from when we... we've got these opportunities. I think you're right, Terry, I think you know I've... I... I go to Brittany a lot and we're... we're, what, 30 km from the nearest big centre; we live in... my partner's family's house is in a little hamlet that's got eight houses and there's a village, of about 25 houses, which is -you know- the average size in that, area about 2km away...

...the nearest pub has a monthly Celtic night and what they do is they bring musicians together from all over the Celtic diaspora and we are talking Welsh musicians, Irish musicians... I've ... oh gosh... that... the north of Spain... the...

...the... the celtic culture... the Galician... thank you; that's the one, yes. With the really fantastic language that, you know, that... there's so many different musician -kind of- groups and they come

to this tiny little pub in the middle of nowhere once a month because that's what is generated. That expectation that we are all one, we can blend together, because we've got this connection in... in... you know, in common... -*[Terry Clarke-Coyne]* Is it Le Ticalaire[[sp?]], the place? -*[Win Lawlor]* No, where I live... it's not far from Guingamp, actually, which is the only football team in the French Premier League from Brittany, so, it's... it's... Guingamp is the place... it's not far from the north, it's more than... yeah

[[some dialogue between Terry and Win, difficult to make out]]

-*[Terry Clarke-Coyne]* ...she plays fiddle, you know; she brings over Irish artists, plus many other, you know, nationalities/artists as well, from Scandinavia and across the European countries, but through, you know, many, many... artists. She goes to the Ennis Trad Festival, every single year for donkey's years, you know. This happens in many, many other places; there's a massive respect for it, but unfortunately it doesn't seem to get the same respect nearer home, where we are. -*[Emma Smith] Okay; I'm going to need to start drawing things together, because this was booked in just for an hour-and-a-half, I'm afraid, and I would like to flag up that we have an artist's commission open at the moment. It ends -probably at the end of January- we may extend, but if there are any artists here and you'd like to take a look at that Gael Linn commission, I've dropped the link into the chat, here. We'd love to hear from you. My understanding is that there is a need for this network, we do want to work together, we would like to drop our artistic details in together and continue to speak. Is quarterly enough or do we need it to be bi-monthly

at the moment I've got it pencilled into my calendar as quarterly

what are the thoughts?

-*[Gerry Molumby]* Gah, I wouldn't have thought quarterly would be enough time, if it's a new group monthly or bi-monthly yeah -*[Emma smith]* So, I'm mindful of my capacity to run it monthly; I could go to... I can go to bimonthly, which would make our next meeting the 16th of March (so that's just before #GlobalGreening for most of us), or we could do the 23rd, assuming that weekday 'professional' hours is the best time for us to meet? That's when I would prefer to meet, because this is very much part of a working world and working collaborations, but is that okay for everybody else? Do we think that's the best time to get the best people? Good okay, so shall we say March 23rd then, and I will issue some other dates working on a bi-monthly pattern from then on? [[General yeses]].

[[Crossover of speech]] -*[Gerry Molumby]* Emma, while you're writing that down, just to give you a heads up that my good friend there in Manchester, Rose Morris... I've done a ... (Hi Rose), I've done a feature for Rose for The Irish Post, which should be out (maybe this week or next week); I did a profile of her 40+ years working in culture and welfare in Manchester and if there's any other people you know -including yourselves- who might like a profile in The Post, just get in touch with me. And... and... in the fullness of time, I'll get something in about this group. -*[Emma Smith]* that's marvellous, thank you ever so much, Gerry. If any of the artists that have met with us today, have ideas started by conversation here, and would like to follow up on those, we don't have to wait for the bi-monthly... well actually not even just the artists, but the cultural organisations, too... if we want to follow up on that, please do drop me an email. I can link you up, if you're not or if you

don't already know one another and I'm very happy to do that. This is a free and open group, but for GDPR reasons, we'll have to sign up that we're, sort of, happy to share those details; so hopefully -I think- you have all signed up for that anyway and, if that's all -unless anybody else has got anything pressing- I'm going to draw this meeting to a close now. The recording for it will be up, hopefully in about 48 hours (if not before) and I will be in touch with you all very soon, by email, to say 'thank you' and to follow up with the notes and my next steps, that have come out of this which include: things that have come out of the white paper and the tool kits that are discussed in here and starting work on those. I would really like everyone to send me a couple of lines and a couple of links about your organisation and your work and I'd like to do a -what's it called?- a Cultural Connectedness Exchange page on our site, so people can find you so we can start talking about you your work and creating our network, so we've just got a fast, sort of, cheat sheet, where we can go and link up to each other. Are you all happy to do that? [[General yeses]] Are there any other pressing points? -*[Win Lawlor]* Can I just say remember to... to tick the ethnicity box on your census on the 21st please? -*[Emma Smith]* Very good point, well made, Win. Ruari, you and I will follow up separately. I am meeting the cultural lead for the Department Of Foreign Affairs.. they've changed their name... Department Foreign Affairs tomorrow, so we'll be able to feed back to the bi-monthly group at the next meeting, how that's gone, where that's going and how this network can benefit from their position. So, with all that done; thank you ever so much for being involved. Terry, I know I'm seeing you [[garbled]] little bit down the week as well... It's been lovely to see all of your faces; nice to meet some new faces and I look forward to seeing you again soon. Thank you so much. [[General 'thank you's']].