



GUIDE FOR PROMOTERS

About Carn to Cove

Carn to Cove is Cornwall's performing arts scheme for rural communities. We support communities to come together to enjoy captivating storytelling in village halls, schools, libraries and churches across every corner of Cornwall.

We are part of the [National Rural Touring Forum \(NRTF\)](#). The NRTF networks, develops and supports the ecosystem that delivers high-quality creative experiences across communities and rural areas in the UK. The aim of the NRTF is to strengthen and support rural populations to bring professional work to their venues.

Carn to Cove is one of a range of creative programmes and activities that make up [Creative Kernow](#). Creative Kernow champions creativity as a force for positive change in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. We are an organisation which provides a range of creative programmes and activities, working towards a shared vision: a thriving Cornwall powered by creativity. Our office is based from Krowji in Redruth but we work across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

About Rural Touring

"In my experience, rural touring is the most progressive, resourceful, sustainable and socially-inclusive mode in which to make art. The rural touring network cares about society, and about each other, and thrives on ingenuity and collaboration. Leave your assumptions at the door and let your journey begin."

Elizabeth Freestone, Associate Director, Royal Shakespeare Company

Rural touring is the process of bringing professional live performance such as theatre, music, dance, or comedy to community spaces like village halls, churches, pubs, libraries, schools and outdoor areas, in locations outside of the major urban settlements.

The approach connects artists with audiences in small, often remote, communities, often through a collaboration between touring schemes, local residents, and professional performers. The goal is to provide high-quality arts experiences for people that may not

otherwise have access to these.

Who is involved?

Artists/Companies: Professional touring artists or companies who have work appropriate to the specifications and needs of community venues and outdoor spaces.

Community Promoters/Programmers: Sometimes known as hosts, these are groups of people living and/or working directly in communities, aiming (often voluntarily) to put on high-quality events and activities with and for their community.

Audience Members: Audiences vary depending on location and the type of show. They are usually hyperlocal and travel short distances to the host venue.

Touring Schemes: Touring schemes act as a link and enabler between artists and promoters. They select a range of suitable work and present that as a 'menu' for community promoters to choose from, updating the selection at least every year. With investment from funders like Arts Council England and local authorities, schemes offer financial support to promoters in the form of subsidy, so that they can afford to host high quality work and artists can receive fair and proper pay.

Being a promoter

Rural touring is only possible due to the hard work, dedication and commitment from volunteer promoters.

You may be an individual keen to make things happen in your area or part of a committee for your village hall or local organisation. In most cases, there is a main promoter who is able to make decisions, take responsibility for the event and be the primary contact for both Carn to Cove and artists. Whatever your situation, you will most likely want to have a small group of people who you can call on to help you run your event, whether that is distributing flyers, hosting artists, or unpacking chairs.

Carn to Cove work with promoters all over Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. To become a promoter you can email info@carntocove.org.uk and register your venue with us. You will then be invited to the next menu party to hear more about how to get involved.

Menu Parties

We hold menu parties twice a year, in April and September, and this is where you get the opportunity to book shows for the forthcoming season.

We put together a list of shows (the menu) covering all different genres and these will be presented at the party, and all the details are contained in the menu brochure. We hold two evening parties per season, (in West Cornwall, and East Cornwall) to make it easier for travelling. We are always looking for venues to host the event, so feel free to volunteer - it's a lovely opportunity to show off your venue to other promoters.

The menu parties are a good opportunity for everyone to get together and hear details of the shows, watch clips and meet some of the performers who come along to give short extracts or talk about their shows. We ask everyone to provide a plate of food, so we can have a break and a chance to chat and catch up at the interval.

If you can't make it to a menu party, you can still receive a brochure and booking form and make choices in the same way. We do encourage you to come to a menu party if at all possible as it is useful to connect with others. You will also hear about the shows in more detail.

Choosing a show

The menu brochure gives details of all the shows, including technical and fee information. It's important when booking a show to factor in the size of the performance area required and the cost. If a show requires a large space or stage to perform in, this may impact on your audience capacity, and will reduce the amount of money you will be able to take on the door. Consider the required technical requirements i.e. does the show need a blackout? A raised stage? How long to the artists need to set up and pack down?

Most artists from outside of Cornwall will need a bed for the night, and a hot meal before or after the performance. This is one of the special features of rural touring and helps to create wonderful bond between promoters and artists.

When choosing a show you'll want to pick something that excites you and that you'll be enthusiastic about encouraging others to book for. You might want to pick something that you know will be attractive to others, or something that might be more of a wild card. Choosing a date is another important consideration. Try to avoid days when there might be other local events on i.e. Bonfire Night, Easter weekend, Flora Day etc.

We will set a deadline for you to return your choices (we ask for your top 3) via a form or email. Due to funding restrictions and capacity we cannot guarantee you will be able to programme a show but we will do our best to make it possible.

We kindly ask that you respect the timelines and deadlines we set. We are a small team working with over 50 promoters a season!

How the finances work

Each community has the potential to receive one subsidised show per season (2 per year). Carn to Cove support you to programme exciting, engaging and ambitious performances for your local audiences and the wider community. We do encourage you to also feel free to book other shows as a self-promotion if finances and time allows.

We have two models:

Subsidised shows:

Carn to Cove pays the artist's their fee. The promoter keeps 20% of the box office income (and any profits made on the bar / cafe / raffle) and pays Carn to Cove either 80% of the box office income, or the minimum guarantee, whichever is greater.

In the menu you will be able to see the full fee and minimum guarantee for each show.

Self-promotion:

The Promoter pays the artist their full fee and keeps 100% of the box office income. Carn to Cove still help with contracting, tickets sales, promotion etc.

In both instances the promoter is responsible for any other cost incurred including local publicity, hall hire, and any ticketing fees if you use your own box office.

After the show, we need to you complete a box office return form detailing your ticket sales. If Carn to Cove owe you money you will need to send us an invoice. If you owe Carn to Cove money then we will send you an invoice. Invoices need to be made out to Creative Kernow and include our address: Creative Kernow, Krowji, West Park, Redruth, TR15 3GE

Box office income is a large proportion of our turnover, and we need it promptly so that we can pay the artists, so if you can fill out and return the form and payment straight away it helps keep our cash flowing nicely.

Contracts

After you have made your choices from the menu, we will confirm the dates with the artists, and issue you with a confirmation. We will send you an online form, and ask you to fill in details such as performance start time, box office telephone number. This is really important as it's used in our season brochure. You can also state how many posters and flyers you'll need the artist to send you.

Once you've returned your confirmation, we will send out the artists contracts, and give them

your contact details for publicity materials.

Publicity and promotion

Of course, selling tickets is vital to the success of your show. There are lots of ways of promoting your show but it does take enthusiasm and commitment. Whatever methods you apply, be sure to be very clear about the following:

- The name of the show
- The name of the venue
- Where the venue is
- What time the show starts
- What the arrival time is
- How much the tickets cost
- How to buy a ticket
- A contact name and number

Posters

Carn to Cove ask all the artists to provide posters for you to use. You can request as many posters (A3 / A4) and flyers (A5) as you like. These will be 'overprinted' with the information specific to your event such as the date, time and venue.

Carn to Cove will be able to help with overprinting. Posters will come to our office with a blank space for the venue specific details which we will 'over-print' onto and send in the post. If you are able to collect posters / flyers from our office in Redruth please do let us know as this saves lots of money on printing costs.

Put your posters up at the venue, at work, Arts Centres, Bed & Breakfasts and hotels, bus shelters, cafes, churches and Parish Council notice boards, council buildings, drop in centres, hospitals, in village and other local shops (supermarkets generally have community notice boards), lamp-posts and telegraph posts, libraries, local theatres, museums, post offices, pubs and clubs, recreation, centres and swimming pools, schools and colleges, surgeries, tourist offices.

At the above places they should have space to take a dozen or so flyers. Send a leaflet in the post to all your contacts, members of your village hall, friends and business colleagues.

Social Media

Carn to Cove has a Facebook page and Instagram accounts. This is one of the primary ways in which we reach new and existing audiences. We encourage you to join in and do the same.

You can create a Facebook event and invite your followers to attend. If you make the scheme a co-host, we can share the event with all our followers as well. If you have any questions about how to do this, see if anyone in the village can help, or give us a call and we can talk you through the process. You can also tag us in posts on Instagram or invite us to co-host a post.

Word of mouth

One of the most effective ways of promoting local events is word of mouth. If you are enthusiastic about your show, that enthusiasm will definitely rub off! Tell everyone you know about the show and tell them how great it's going to be. Ask others to spread the word and do the same. Could someone arrange a 'social' for an existing group or organisation.

You could contact local groups and schools (where appropriate). People might need to hear / see details about the show a few times before they actually book.

Local press / newsletters

Put a notice in the free listings of your local paper or parish newsletter. The newsletter usually requires about a fortnight's notice. You should not have to pay to be included in newspaper listings sections.

Write your press release, invite the newspaper to send a photographer to take a photograph of, for example, a couple of volunteers putting up posters.

BBC Radio Cornwall is also worth contacting, your local parish magazine and newsletters too.

Selling tickets

You can choose to sell tickets locally, through our online ticketing system which is managed by Cornwall 365, or both.

If you choose to use Cornwall 365 they will set up an online page with Ticket Tailor for selling tickets online. They will also sell tickets via the phone Monday - Friday 10am - 3pm

You will be given a login to Ticket Tailor so you can monitor your own sales.

Currently a large percentage of our total ticket sales are made online, so we encourage you to allocate at least this percentage of your total ticket capacity to online sales. This will depend on the type of show you are promoting, but can be anything from 10 tickets to all of the tickets. The allocation is flexible and you can choose to increase or decrease depending on your local situation, at any time.

The system is designed to be very flexible, and can be changed on a show-by-show basis. For

example, if you book a show and are confident of selling all the tickets, then you can give over a smaller allocation. If you book a show that you think will be harder to sell, you could offer to sell half yourself and half online.

You can always change the allocation by contacting Joanna at Cornwall 365 directly. Your biggest worry is probably that you won't sell 'enough' tickets. Don't worry if you don't fill the venue. Enjoyment by those who are there is far more important than sheer numbers. On saying that, if anyone asks, always say 'tickets are selling well', it makes people feel that if they don't buy a ticket they'll be missing out on something good - which is true!

Make it easy for people to buy tickets. If they have to phone for a ticket, make sure they know when would be the best time to call, use an answer-phone and if someone leaves a message call them back. Potential customers will soon get disgruntled if they can't get what they want!

You could also recruit volunteer ticket sellers, for example, if your venue seats 100 people, recruit 4 ticket sellers to sell 25 tickets each. That's a realistic target and shares the work load. Keep in touch with all the ticket sellers at regular intervals to find out how sales are going.

Set up a temporary box office at your community centre, at the library, in a local shop. Make sure your publicity clearly outlines where the box office is and the hours it is open.

Delegate one person to hold the money from ticket sales, perhaps the treasurer of the community hall.

Don't worry if you don't sell all your tickets in advance, if you've promoted the event, people will turn up on the night.

Your venue: technical requirements

Creating a technical information sheet is the easiest way of arming yourself with the right information should anyone require it. It helps you be absolutely clear on what you can provide on a practical level. It should include:

A general introduction about the venue, your community group and the kind events community projects you do.

The venue name, address, telephone and email.

The key-holder's name, address and phone number.

A map or directions of how to find the village hall and the key-holder's house.

Access - are there any steps? How wide and high are the doors?

A simple floor plan.

A cross section of the hall, with heights and roof beams in the way.

Venue size - length, width, unobstructed height.

Stage, if you have one, size and height off the floor.

Stage and window curtains, what colour are they?

Floor surface; e.g. wood, lino, smooth or rough.

Black out; full black out, curtains, high windows.

Lighting equipment, if any.
Sound equipment, if any.
Power supply, single or double phase, how many 13 amp, 32 amp, or 63 amp sockets?
Disabled access and facilities.
Dressing rooms, kitchens, toilets, how big and how many?
Refreshments

Make enough copies of your technical information sheet - be sure that copies are easily obtainable by yourself and other volunteers. That means if someone phones up, asking for on, for example, *'how do I find your venue?'* you and your volunteers will be able to give them precise answers.

Similarly, you need precise information from performers. Ask them to provide their own technical sheets, telling you if they have any visual effects, sound effects, doing any stunts. It's okay if the show you've booked consists of one man sitting on a chair but if he's going to set fire to the chair, you need to know about it! We will give you the performers contact details at a later date.

Preparing for the show – working with Artists

As the date for your show draws near, the performers will discuss with you when they will need to arrive at your venue and how long they need to set up before the start of the show. Ensure somebody is there to welcome the artists and show them around. Be clear with artists about what time they can arrive, and what time you will be opening the doors to the audience. This is usually 30 minutes before the start of the show.

When the artist(s) arrive

Give them a warm welcome, a cup of tea and offer to help. They might have travelled a long way.

Offer to help them unload. Ideally, they should unload through a wide door and straight into the performance area. Warn them beforehand about double yellow lines and 3 flights of stairs!

The performer will not expect quality changing rooms, but they welcome:
Heating and cleanliness.
A place for hanging costumes and a full length mirror
Their own toilets, if possible.
Access to a kitchen when setting up.

When the artist(s) sets up

Be on-hand to answer any questions and help, e.g. where they can park and unload, where the fuse box is, is there a telephone / Wi-Fi, who will switch the house lights on and off. But give them enough time and space to set up.

Ensure both you and the artists have enough time to set up the performance and audiences spaces, check the technical requirements, tidy up, and very importantly have a break before the audience arrive.

When the artist(s) pack up

The performers will either pack up and leave straightaway after the show if they are not staying the night.

They will discuss with you how long the performers need to pack up. Be prepared to stay late, it can take a while to get the van loaded.

Offer them refreshments. If you are all going down the pub, invite them!

Before they leave, double check that they haven't left anything behind.

Artist(s) Homestay

If you are providing accommodation make sure they know who they are staying with and how to get there.

Are there any constraints e.g. no smoking except in the garden, no phone calls.

If they are going to come in late, do they have a key?

Does the host have enough beds and bedding?

Let them use hot water and a washing machine.

Is the host providing meals and refreshments.

Encourage the host to be friendly and welcoming but chats long into the night probably won't go down well with exhausted performers!

Preparing for the show – your venue

Audience seating

Consider how you are going to set up the audiences seating? Discuss with the artist what they have prepared for:

Proscenium: Audience faces one side, separated by an arch; traditional for halls with a raised stage.

Thrust: Stage projects into the audience, with seating on three sides for intimacy.

Arena (In-the-Round): Central performance area with audience on all sides, maximizing engagement.

Traverse (Catwalk): Audience on two opposing sides, good for long, narrow spaces.

Promenade: Audience moves with the performance through different locations.

Cabaret: Audience sat around small tables. Good if audience need a surface for drinks / food or something to lean on

Ensure there is access to all the seats. How can you ensure everybody be able to see the show. Can you stagger chairs, put them in a curve?

Preparing for the public

You and your volunteers will need to:

Make sure the venue is clean and tidy.

Set up your refreshments, raffle prizes and raffle tickets.

Make sure you have a sign outside saying 'This Way!'

Make sure the doors are open, the lights are on and you don't look closed!

Make sure people know where to park.

Put some music on, have nice lighting, make the place look really special.

Stock up the toilets and make sure they're clean.

Make sure you have enough volunteers to sell any remaining tickets, programmes, raffle tickets, refreshments, show people to their seats, assist the performers should they need it.

Put the seats out last; ask the performers for their advice.

Make sure fire exits are clearly marked, make sure fire extinguishers are easily accessible and you know where the first aid kit is.

Preparing for the show – legal and health and safety

Your venue will have a range of policies in place to ensure people are safe and healthy. It is your responsibility to make sure that you have read these policies and have clearly communicated this to any volunteers. If you are unsure it is best to ask.

When preparing for an event you will want to make sure you are aware of some practicalities which might include the following:

Where is the first aid kit and is it properly stocked?

Who amongst your volunteers, or even in your audience, are qualified with first aid skills?

How do you contact people in an emergency?

Where is the phone and does it work?

Do you have fire alarms, smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and emergency lights?

Has the venue had a recent visit from your Fire Brigade's Fire Prevention Officer?

Are all the fire doors clearly marked and unlocked?

Has someone checked at the end of the night that all the heaters and electrical appliances are turned off?

Licences and Insurance

In general, if your performers are 'adopting a role' (theatre, opera etc.) or you are promoting music or public dancing you need to be covered by a Premises Licence. We recommend that you check with Cornwall Council to be certain of what kind of licence you need for what type of performance.

As a promoter you are also responsible for insuring the relevant insurance is in place. Artists will have Public Liability Insurance but you will want to make sure you are covered by the venue's own insurance too.

Preparing for the show – the Performance

You and your volunteers should:

Arrive at the venue before the audience.

Know the location of entrances, exits and cloakrooms.

Know the details of the show so they can tell the public, if asked.

Know when the audience can take their seats – the Company may well need the space up to ten minutes before the show, especially if there is no separate room where they can warm-up.

Know when the interval is, and when the show finishes.

The Box Office

Ensure your box office is easily accessible and does not create a queue to block the entrance. Programmes and raffle tickets are sold well away from the bottle neck at the tickets. You will want to coordinate your volunteers so that different people are responsible for different things: tickets, raffle, refreshments, ushering etc.

Fill your cash box with a large float and keep separate floats for the tickets, the raffle, refreshments etc. This will help when you need to calculate the box office return payments.

If you have used Cornwall 365's box office you will be emailed a door list of names around 3pm on the day of the show (for evening performances). These will be in alphabetical order. There is also the option of scanning tickets, or checking tickets via the Ticket Tailor App on your phone. If you would like to use the app then please do contact Joanna at Cornwall 365 before your event and she can set this up for you.

Getting the Audience seated

Check the fire exits and any possible hazards and allocate space for wheelchairs, for those who cannot climb steps or need more leg room. Get the audience seated quickly, efficiently and politely.

Allow children in the audience to feel comfortable and welcome. They will make a noise but if they're seated on mats at the front with an adult nearby their unique brand of audience participation (!) will probably enhance the atmosphere anyway.

You can decide on your venue's late-comers policy. This might need to be in discussion with the artists - i.e. you can let in late-comers up to 10 minutes after the start time but not later.

Think about how people arriving late might disrupt the performance or fellow audience. Can you collect tickets quietly outside and show them to their seats between scenes or songs?

Start on time

Short delays are acceptable to everyone but more than ten minutes is discourteous to those who have arrived early and to the performers. If there is a longer delay due to a local incident preventing the audience from arriving on time, or with a technical hitch at the venue, you should make an announcement about a delay to the start time. Put some music on and keep the bar open to keep everyone entertained.

Public Announcements

If you want to make an announcement at the start of the show please do check with the artists about what and when might be appropriate. You could also use the interval or after the show to make announcements about a raffle, forthcoming events and thanking anyone. If possible it is also useful to let the audience know that the show has been supported by Carn to Cove. It is great for our profile and to let people know about the scheme.

Refreshments

Arrange for plenty of volunteers to serve refreshments.

Set everything up before the show starts to avoid volunteers having to exit noisily before the interval. A quick turn-around (20 mins) is needed, especially if there is also a raffle in the interval so avoid long queues and bottle-necks. Have plenty of refreshments. Everyone will want something, you don't want to run out, and it's a great way of making extra money.

After the show

There are always things to do afterwards - ask for as much help afterwards as for setting up or one lonely person (probably you!) will be stacking chairs whilst everyone else is in the pub! Let the company do their own clearing up. They will appreciate it if you keep out of their way, but be around if help is needed. Make them a cup of tea or place a drinks order for them at the pub.

Share your success

If you are part of a committee, you can report back to any members who weren't there.

You could share a post on social media, or in local groups, to share what a brilliant event it was. You, or someone else, might want to write a blog post or review for your local newsletter or venue website.

And if you don't think the event went well, you had a smaller than expected audience, or you didn't enjoy the show...try not to worry too much. Some events will be more successful than others. You can reflect on what worked, and what didn't so you can improve the event next time. Carn to Cove are always happy to help and advise so please don't keep all your concerns to yourself.

Box Office Returns

Once the show is over and the performers have set off for their next adventure, it's time to settle down to fill out the paperwork. You'll need to fill out a box office return form to reconcile the costs and the takings, and send us the payment, as well as giving us some feedback on the event on behalf of the audience as well as yourself.

Please complete your box office return promptly so that we can manage payments to you, and to the artists. The box office return form has been designed to be filled out in excel, where the formulas will work out the sums for you. You need to insert the number of tickets sold in section 1 and section 2, and this will give you a total sales figure. You can then work out if you've made more than the minimum guarantee—which we all hope you have, and then calculate the 80/20 split (or the form will do it for you).

Audience numbers and box office returns are vital to us so that we can report back to our funders each year. The returns are audited each year, so it's important to report accurate figures.

And finally...

Enjoy being part of the Carn to Cove network of promoters! The Carn to Cove team are always here to help if you have questions or concerns. You are playing a key role in supporting creativity in Cornwall and enhancing your local community.