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Robert Kilpatrick
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Dear Robert

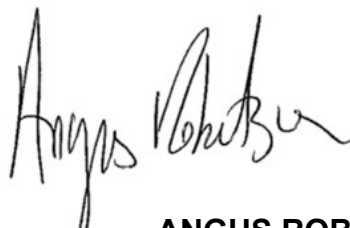
Thank you for your email to the First Minister and your work to draw attention to your members of Creative Scotland's plans to close the Open Fund.

Both the First Minister, my Cabinet colleagues and I greatly value the importance of the arts especially the significant contribution freelance artists and creatives make not only to wellbeing but to the cultural, social and economic life in communities across Scotland. The announcement reaffirmed earlier this year by the First Minister to increase funding for culture and the arts so that it is at least £100m more annually by 2028/29 clearly signals the Government's confidence in the sector; borne out by making the first incremental increase to the sector by almost £16m in 2024/25 and the pledge to increase that further in the forthcoming budget.

The Scottish Government provides significant funding to Creative Scotland each year, and will continue doing so, and so it was disappointing that Creative Scotland took the decision about the Open Fund last week. Before any funding from the Scottish Budget is released due diligence is routinely carried out to ensure value for money and the appropriate use of public funding. Creative Scotland submitted its plans for use of the £6.6m in June this year following approval of its Board, and I am now delighted to confirm that due diligence has now concluded, and both £1.8m for the Youth Music Access and Strengthening Fund and the £6.6m has been released to Creative Scotland. The latter includes £3m for the Open Fund for individuals and it is my firm expectation that the fund will be reopened imminently.

I hope that you agree that this is very welcome news that we have been able to protect this funding, despite the difficult financial position the Scottish Government faces.

Please feel free to share this letter with your members and on your website.



ANGUS ROBERTSON

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