



**The Dorset Performing Arts Fund (DPAF)  
Year 4 Impact report – grants awarded June 2022**

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The idea to create the Dorset Performing Arts Fund emerged from a Bridport based community theatre Project called “FLEA!” which took place in 2017. This large scale production involved a diverse cast & crew of over 200 children and adults, led by a team of local professional artists. Local philanthropist Alasdair Warren was inspired by the level of enthusiasm, community engagement and broad-based community benefit which “FLEA!” generated. Working with the team responsible for producing “FLEA!”, producer Sally Vaughan, community dance practitioner Anna Golding and theatre director Niki McCretton, the purpose and guiding principles for the Dorset Performing Arts Fund were defined.

## Grant to the Arts Development Company

### Summary

#### Expenditure

- £9000 - 29 days of ADC staff time used for the delivery of the grant funded activities
- £5000 - CPD bursaries
- £1000 – Marketing & Publicity

#### Purpose of grant

- Support organisations to make applications to the Dorset Performing Arts Fund (Round 5 of Main Grants Programme), developing new innovative projects & performances that deliver social benefit
- Support performing arts organisations' sustainability by providing support and networking opportunities
- Continue running the CPD bursary scheme for professional artists in need of financial support

#### Beneficiaries

- 14 professional performing artists received a CPD bursary
- 14 Expression of Interest processed and 11 shortlisted organisations supported to apply to DPAF
- 548 members of networking platform What Next Dorset
- 1 to 1 support to 38 individuals

### Supporting groups to apply to the DPAF Main Grants Programme

Arts Development Company used an Expression of Interest for the first time this year, to generate a higher number of applications to the Dorset Performing Arts Fund. This also enabled them to reach out to organisations at an earlier stage, and support the development of ideas – particularly organisations working in areas identified as 'cold spots' for arts activities and applications to the Fund, namely East Dorset and North Dorset.

Arts Development Company and Dorset Community foundation were please that more of the proposals were addressing the needs of marginalised groups across Dorset, reflecting the amended Criteria for the Dorset Performing Arts Fund created in the previous year.

### Professional artist CPD bursary programme

ADC awarded £5K of CPD bursaries to 14 freelancers ranging from physical theatre to script writing to accent lessons. They developed an easier application process, with entries being selected at random and then cross referenced for eligibility.

*"Before the grant, I had never been able to commit to classes due to financial and time constraints. The grant has relieved the financial strain and given me the freedom to enjoy these classes. Grateful for learning new skills and meeting new people. I have since continued these classes. Receiving the grant has increased my overall confidence and has validated my creative practice."*

- Amy Groves received a bursary of £500 to attend the 5-day Young Choreographers programme at Pavilion Dance South West in Bournemouth led by choreographer and Co-Artistic Director of Alleyne Dance, Sadé Alleyne.
- Anna Takashima received a bursary of £200 to attend a course of 10 sessions with an accent and dialect coach to build her portfolio of accents.

- Archie Rowell received a bursary of £500 to attend Frantic Assembly's Advanced Training Course in London in November 2023.
- Charlotte Fernandes received a bursary of £300 to attend a Professional Aerial Training Course in Hoop, Spanish Web and Silks in London in February 2024 with 4 days training and filming to expand her skills and employability further than dancing.
- Charlotte Peach received a bursary of £200 to see local arts performances and projects, to use towards research and material fees for outreach workshops, and to meet with other artists for inspiration in London.
- Charmaine K received a bursary of £200 to attend local live theatre performances to inspire me and to travel to meet with mentors across the county.
- Finola Brennan received a bursary of £395 to attend spoken word poetry training with Molly Nailer, to attend Tom Hirons and Rozi Hilton's Wielding the Green Knife weekend poetry intensive and a 5-week course of poetry editing inspiration with Laurie Boulder.
- Kelly Hunter from The Artori Academy received a bursary of £500 to book a puppeteer to teach the children at her stage school how to make and use their own puppets.
- Mahtab Grimshaw received a bursary of £210 to attend an 8-day Giant Puppet Master Class by Andrew Kim of Thingumajig Theatre in West Yorkshire.
- Molly Borland received a bursary of £300 to see shows at 1532 Performing Art Centre, to visit Wake The Tiger Amusement Park and visit art galleries in London and Bristol.
- Monika Brodowska received a bursary of £500 to attend Professional Actor Development workshops, to watch local Dorset theatre companies work and to buy and download contemporary plays and scripts.
- Nadine Shaban received a bursary of £500 to attend yoga, movement, and pilates classes at Glow Collective in Bridport, to attend a costume course with Sarah Whiteside at Stepford Studios in Weymouth and to go to London to visit creative mentor and collaborator Petra Casale and to visit exhibitions, performances and dance classes.
- Susan Grant received a bursary of £245 to attend a 2-day course of script and musical writing.
- Tim Poultney received a bursary of £450 to attend The Arvon Foundation's Online Writing Week Course.

## **Case Studies**

### **• Archie R:**

*"It was an easy, perfect process to apply for. Asking enough, but not too much. The grant meant I could do the course, I wouldn't be able to do it otherwise. Being able to access courses like this doesn't happen as often in Dorset as it does in London. It took the pressure off of having to get something out of it, so I was much more open to it, which was really lovely going in. Here to experience it rather than force something out of it.*

*I found myself introducing myself as a Frantic trained performer. It has been a lovely accolade to have. It was also surprising meeting the people I met - a very different group to what I imagined. This is the sort of course that will pay dividends in the future and it has really improved my practice."*

### **• Charlotte F:**

*"The grant made a huge difference because I'm not London based, so to afford the course and travel and accommodation is too much of a stretch. It is a big investment, the DPAF grant has alleviated that and given me the motivation to go, as the cost is always a barrier to making it happen to go.*

*The intensity of the week was akin in training for months in weekly classes. It was unexpected to get one of the skills filmed, which can be used for a showreel or for finding work. It has been a fantastic stepping stone and work on a skill that allows me to build on a skill for my career different to dance and choreography, but also feels like it is for me. It's offered me an opportunity as a creative that I wouldn't otherwise have been able to access, and there isn't enough opportunities like this, which makes it more important that DPAF is here to support people like me."*

## Connecting artists and organisations / Long term impact

ADC ran the What's Next network - and continue to do so. There are currently 548 individual members as per our facebook page. There are bi-monthly steering group meetings and during the grant period 10 meetings were held across Dorset, bringing the sector together to explore and discuss opportunities and challenges. At each meeting we have on average 30 people attending (in person and online). Guest speakers included Chris Loader MP and Paul Gough (AUB Vice Chancellor).

One of the main benefits of the What's Next network are the conversations that also happen in between meetings with those who have connected at an event. We have held conversations around opportunities for students in the creative industries, how we can work with MPs to advocate for Culture (which has led to ongoing conversations with Chris Loader MP) conversations around local government cuts and more. These networks help freelancers and organisations to feel connected, up to date and heard when facing a myriad of challenges in a difficult climate

We have provided one to one support for 38 individual artist, from - grant writing to signposting to company set up, digital skills and more - all of which have helped freelancers experience, confidence and progression with their creative practice.

We estimated that 120 performing arts organisations benefitted from support via either Whats Next or 1 to 1 meetings.

## Main Grants Programme

### Summary

| Group  | Artists   | Community participants | Community Audience |
|--|-----------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Angel Exit Theatre   | 11        | 36                     | 1619               |
| Teatro Vivo  | 5         | 28                     | 0 (R&D project)    |
| Landance CIC   | 7         | -                      | 0 (R&D project)    |
| Chettle Community Benefit Society and Gobbledegook Theatre | 12        | 55                     | 210                |
| Emerald Ant CIC  | 8         | 170                    | 0 (R&D project)    |
| Babigloo Music for Babies CIC                              | 2         | 110                    | 0 (R&D project)    |
| The Priest's House Museum Trust                            | 13        | 13                     | 100                |
|  | <b>58</b> | <b>412</b>             | <b>1929</b>        |

## 1) Angel Exit Theatre

### Summary

£15,500 grant awarded to develop The Fairy Tale Forest with professional artists and community participants (including adults with disabilities and additional needs) in a Gillingham garden centre - an interactive performing and visual arts experience for the community during the Christmas season.

***"Thank you. It was a good straightforward application process for us and allowed us to create an exciting project which created some great opportunities for people up here in North Dorset who wouldn't normally get to engage with the arts... We had so much appreciation from everyone who watched and was involved and that was all made possible with this grant."***

### Beneficiaries

- 11 artists (5 new to the organisation)
- 36 community participants (all new to the organisation)
- 1619 community audience (1089 Dorset residents and 530 visitors to Dorset)

### Project delivery

We created a bespoke version of The Fairy Tale Forest at Thorngrove Garden Centre in Gillingham with Employ My Ability (EMA), which was free to attend and audiences didn't need to book. The installation of the forest was created in a polytunnel with our professional theatre designer with EMA members of staff and day service users. We also had some decorations created by Gillingham library craft and chat group.

Community volunteers and staff, students and Day Service users from Employ My Ability, participated in 5 workshops over five weeks with members of Angel Exit Theatre, our designer Tish Mantripp and a Theatre musician Mark Stevenson. These community participants were supported to perform as woodland creatures in the forest. Tish Mantripp carried out making workshops with EMA and community volunteers to create their own bespoke costumes, wired head dresses, stick gnomes, tree decorations, vintage style book page decorations, toadstool wood logs, willow arches and other decorations. Mark Stevenson ran workshops with EMA to create an original song which was mixed & recorded, and sung live in the performances. Tamsin and Lynne worked with community and EMA members to create woodland characters, to choreograph movements to the song and devise scenes where they interacted with Mary Godmother and to teach skills in interacting with audiences.



We delivered 15 public performances of The Fairy Tale Forest each lasting between 60 - 90 minutes long. People aged 10 weeks to 85 years old attended. Audiences walked through a magical fairy tale forest, encountering woodland creatures along the way and then came across a hidden gingerbread emporium in the heart of the forest run by Mary Godmother (played by Angel Exit's Lynne Forbes). Lynne interacted individually with audiences, inviting them to come into her shop, do a stock take, open Christmas cards, decorate her tree and share some gingerbread and fairy tale gossip. We gave away half of the Christmas trees to local people who came to collect them in time for Christmas. Much of the material used for the forest was retained by Thorngrove and EMA and will be repurposed / reused. Other things will be composted / recycled.



### Ensuring an inclusive audience

We worked closely with staff and students / day service users at Employ My Ability to ensure that the project was accessible and inclusive for both participants and audiences. Song sheets were produced with large text and “InPrint” pictorial symbols to aid learning for participants. Participants from EMA represent disabilities including wheelchair users, limited mobility, deaf, neuro diversity, visually impaired, learning disabilities, and all were able to participate. BSL and makaton signs were incorporated into the dance choreography. All the pathways in the forest were tested for wheelchair accessibility.

### Impact

The response was very positive. The fact that it was free was definitely important for lots of people and families came in large groups because it was free so they could afford to come all together. People seemed genuinely surprised by the experience and many said it was better than they were expecting.

Feedback from community participants:

*“I feel that the whole experience brought everyone together. Even the quieter students came to life and enjoyed every moment to the point of coming in on their college break to participate. It had a calming effect on our Autistic students too.”* Jo Russell, Education Co-Ordinator, Employ My Ability

*“Thank you so much for what you gave the community of Gillingham and the students at Employ My Ability. It did wonders for the students' confidence and self-esteem and the joy on the young faces of those who visited was truly magical. Thanks to Angel Exit Theatre for embracing the true essence of Christmas and to the Dorset Community Foundation and Dorset Council for giving so much to so many in these austere times - it was quite literally priceless!”* Barry Parker, Tutor, Employ My Ability

*“It was lovely actually, I was the barn owl, I loved it. I really Enjoyed when the drum would start playing and we would tip toe into the forest to sing our song.”* Jay, Employ My Ability

*“It was the best, it has been my favourite thing to do, I liked singing the songs, and acting like a badger.”* Sam, Employ My Ability

*“I just wanted to say thank you so much for the amazing experience you provided us at Thorngrove last week. I had the most amazing time and learnt a lot from the experience. I Really enjoyed the workshops, learning about interactive theatre and making new friends”* 14 year old participant



Audience comments:

*"Shout out to all the staff and people at Thorngrove GC/employ my ability/ Angel exit theatre for the fairy tale forest. My 4 year old daughter has not stopped talking about you all and the magic forest, the fairy godmother was absolutely amazing and all the children were engrossed... memories to be cherished, simple but brilliant. Thank you."*

*"The Thorngrove, Gillingham magical fairy forest experience was exceptional! So imaginative and atmospheric. I took my grandchildren aged 11, 10 and 6 to it and they all loved it. Mary Godmother was a triumph! Thank you all so much."*

*"It was the most beautiful experience - just like walking into Magic. We loved the interactivity and how the creatures populated the world. We especially loved the jar of clouds inside the shop - all the potions and jars which had stories attached were an absolute delight. A wonderful alternative winter adventure!"*

We have a strong relationship with Employ My Ability and Thorngrove Garden Centre now. They are keen to have us back at some point to run workshops and create another performance there. We have more of a connection with Gillingham School having had volunteer participants from the school and met one of the drama teachers.

Whilst we already had a fairly good following further south and west in Dorset, we didn't previously have much of an audience base up in North Dorset but this project has introduced us to lots of new people up here. We had an increase of people to our mailing list and several new Instagram and facebook follows as a direct result of this activity, as well as a good amount of engagement on our posts in local facebook groups. Several people have said they would look out for our next event or performance in the area.

We have established a spreadsheet of local press and media contacts, schools, facebook groups etc as a direct result of this grant. We were interviewed on BBC Radio Solent and This is Alfred and we had editorial articles written in Blackmore Vale Magazine and Visitor Magazine and a Gillingham News website article.

### **Future legacy**

We will probably carry out the same project again in another location so it has given us valuable experience of managing this project in a very different scenario to the one we did it in before. It has also given us invaluable experience of working with young people with SEN and it's given us the confidence to work more with community groups going forwards and trust in their abilities and in our ability to communicate our ideas and help them to create their own work. This will be really useful as we go on to work on the Poole Community Play this summer. We have good experience now and have learnt some lessons in how to work in an inclusive way.

## **2) Teatro Vivo**

### **Summary**

£4000 grant awarded for a **Research & Development** project to build relationships with the Weymouth community and local groups through performing arts workshops, with a view to involving participants in a performance project later this year.

*"As always it's a pleasure being involved with you! We're grateful for your thoughtful input, and the human face to the organisation that is provided by (Grants Manager)"*

### **Beneficiaries**

- 5 artists (1 was new to the organisation)
- 28 community participants (27 new to the organisation)



### **Project delivery**

As discussed with DCF, it was felt that in order to stage a really successful theatre project in Weymouth it would be useful to forge links with community groups before embarking on a wider project - this grant of £4000 enabled us to do this really successfully. We ran 4 workshops with Dorset Blind: one aerial conditioning, one aerial silks class, one songwriting session and a general improvisation class. We ran a single songwriting workshop for the Lantern Trust. We ran 2 immersive theatre sessions for students from Weymouth College, and finally 2 immersive acting and contemporary dance workshops where members of these groups came together, alongside general local residents and members of Weymouth Drama Group. The workshops were run by experienced, high quality professionals - Aerial classes with Charlie Bicknell, dance workshops with Claire Benson of Dorset Youth Dance, and acting and songwriting with Teatro Vivo Artistic Directors.

The programme allowing Teatro Vivo to have a better understanding of needs on the ground in Weymouth, which greatly assisted with the planning of our immersive show 'Dangerous Games' in Weymouth in March 2023 when over 15 workshop participants signed up to be part of our Community Chorus. Our relationship with Dorset Blind is now so cemented that they lent us their shop as a show venue! This final production was possible thanks to Arts Council funding – our R&D funded by DPAF helped to leverage this grant. We have also continued to mentor the students from Weymouth College, recently going back to have career development meetings with them and run a bespoke masterclass to aid their progress.

We now feel we have made really great connections in Weymouth, and have recently got a small amount of funding for some additional workshops in the area so hope to work with both Lantern Trust and Dorset Blind again. We have also had great support from Weymouth BID who are very keen for us to work more in the town. Word of mouth from participants, as well as having had some admin time to reach out to local Weymouth orgs was extremely useful when we hadn't made any work in the town previously.



**Video:**  
[https://youtu.be/B5\\_6e6ElpGw](https://youtu.be/B5_6e6ElpGw)

### **Ensuring an inclusive audience**

Our aim with these workshops was to forge links with hard to reach groups, to make sure we were looking beyond the usual demographics who participate in arts activities. This definitely had its challenges but the strategy of reaching out to organisations that already work with these groups (Dorset Blind and Lantern Trust) meant we could work with their outreach teams to make sure we understood and accommodated participant needs. Our strategy of going to work with groups in their own familiar spaces in the first instance was really helpful in attracting participants.

### Impact

The programme taught new skills and bringing new found confidence to participants (some of whom had never been involved in any artistic project in their lives). In the case of Dorset Blind, we quickly discovered that their service users were extremely keen and up for anything! Dorset Blind staff needed much more persuading that we could make an aerial workshop for blind and partially sighted participants safe, but we were able to do this and a brilliant time was had by all. Participants spoke of getting fitter, of the joy in taking part in a group activity, of how exhilarating it was to take part in a physical class. And how lovely it was for their guide dogs to be included! We think that the legacy is that Dorset Blind will be open to doing more challenging and surprising activities with their service users.



*"I didn't expect Floss, my guide dog, would have such a wonderful time. She got very excited when we were dancing, jumping up and dancing with me. She loved it as much as I did."*

*"I just want to thank you for bringing back part of my life that I'd had to give up due to my eyesight. Being able to be part of the workshops and the show and not have to worry about my sight holding me back, as everything had been adjusted to make sure myself and my guide dog were safe and included at all time. I don't think I have the words to tell you how much this meant to me."*

With the Lantern trust, service users were often socially uncomfortable, and needed a very gentle approach. We were also able to accommodate participants individual skills - with one participant who is a brilliant artist coming along to rehearsals for the immersive show to sketch for us, as he wanted to be involved but was too shy to perform. In this way we felt we were able to include people who by the very nature of having been homeless have often felt excluded from society, and for them to meet other local people from very different demographics, forging connections in the community.

We were warned by Weymouth College tutors that since Covid students had been disengaged, flakey and very bad at time keeping. We put in some measures to pre-empt this: regular catch-ups with our Artistic Directors, reminder emails about timings of sessions, but actually found them to be dedicated and enthusiastic (though the timekeeping issue was indeed correct!) The young people now have a professional credit on their CV (all took part in the production itself) as well as an offer of ongoing mentoring support from Teatro Vivo. A number of them have now graduated and are trying to get a foothold in the industry and have already been asking us for advice as they take their first steps.

### Future legacy

We have ambition to develop regular community workshop groups as a way of attracting local participants, building skills and connecting people across the invisible divides in their communities, being truly inclusive to those with additional needs and specifically working to attract those from hard to reach groups. So when we have one of our large scale immersive shows in production there is a group already set up and ready to participate. In the longer term we have a vision that our productions will be developed in partnership with these community groups; responding to their wants, interests and needs. We would also love to have exchanges where our London group in Lewisham comes to Dorset and vice versa.

So far we have raised £10,000 per year for the next 5 years from City Bridge Trust for the London group, and £7500 from Foyle Foundation for some exploratory workshops.

## **3) Landance CIC**

### Summary

£4056 grant awarded for a **Research & Development** project supporting local artists and young artists to work towards a project in 2023 which will involve community participants in a performance event in Swanage.

***“It has made a huge difference to my organisation to be able to apply to the Dorset Performing Arts Fund for support for the projects that I run here in Dorset. This facilitates the ongoing development of projects that the young artists that I work with need in order to stabilise their careers within an increasingly difficult creative environment.”***

### Beneficiaries

- 7 artists

### Project delivery

This R&D was invaluable as it enabled Landance to crystalize ideas about the project and how to structure the creative team and the project development. It gave us all time to work on site and in a hall creatively, further developing potential ideas and refining them. It clarified the potential of enabling the young dance artists to lead the choreography of parts of the performances, whilst giving them the rare opportunity to create choreography on professionals. It provided continuity, bringing together the same creative team of dancers to work together, strengthening their working relationships. It provided a firm base on which to write my funding applications.

We ran school, Library, Remix and Allsort’d project related workshops. We secured the hall hire and lighting hire in kind. This released funds for travel to the site visits to develop the final creative structure of the project:

- Mowlem ADC networking day followed by a site visit to the Downs
- Durlston: to explore potential collaboration over marketing, workshop space and accommodation during the project. They suggested we contact Allsort’d, who became a project partner.
- A visit to enable me to write the risk assessment required by the Town Council

### Impact

Young dancers Reuben and Rory worked extremely well in their sections leading the professional dancers during the R&D period, which has given them confidence about doing so for the public performances this year. They are both now very engaged with the site and potential dance work they can lead there. We explored the lighting in the hall with the use of a large piece of fabric. The videos taken by the lighting assistant helped me evaluate the work and some have been used on social media.



This R&D resulted in me raising the whole budget for the main performance project this year. Landance in Swanage 2023 is being supported by Arts Council England, Dorset Library Service, Dorset Council, Dorset Community Foundation, Dorset Performing Arts Fund, with in kind from the Mowlem Theatre, Diverse City, Swanage Town Council, Remix & Allsort'd. A total budget of £36561, including in kind worth £1459.00.

#### **Ensuring an inclusive audience**

The culminating performance project has resulted in running dance workshops with Remix and Allsort'd for a wide range of young people with varied abilities, a whole day of dance workshops at the local primary school and half a day upcoming at the Library. One of the 2 planned performances will be accessible to wheelchair users and less mobile people, with accessible marketing for the project and the associated information.

#### **Future legacy**

The R&D helped to develop partnerships with the Mowlem, Swanage Town Council, Diverse City and Allsort'd. We also links with the Swanage Disabled Club, the Rowing Club, Durlston, Swanage Primary School. These will support future collaborations. The dance artists including the young emerging artists/ assistants gave useful and thoughtful feedback on their experiences of the R&D which has fed into my planning for this year. All of the work this year will be asking for feedback & evaluations as usual.

### **4) Chettle Community Benefit Society and Gobbledegook Theatre**

#### **Summary**

£8000 grant awarded for the creation of a performance with the Chettle community inspired by the old routines around Wassailing, designed to encourage residents to reconnect with local land and the orchard.

***“We believe that this type of place-making is very special in a small community, as well as in larger places. The children of Chettle have experienced the power of being able to create events from scratch, a wonderful legacy for their future creativity.”***

#### **Project delivery**

Over several weeks, and in collaboration with excellent professional artists we worked with a dedicated group of Chettle adults and children to co-create songs, costumes and a new ritual for the Wassail. We also created a Wassail at the Sixpenny Handley School, following two day-long workshops, where the entire school celebrated with us, teaching and singing songs ancient and new. The children were able to incorporate drums & percussion instruments, as well as dress up in nature-based costumes. This fostered a greater knowledge of surrounding countryside, history and folklore, teaching very old songs which have been sung in the landscape for centuries.

We had an extraordinary afternoon working with award winning, mercury award nominee Sam Lee, resulting in the new song 'Apple Almanac' which is a love-song to the orchard throughout the seasons. Musician and human ecologist Zoe Laureen Palmer helped us devise a 'Gathering Song' and unique drumming rhythm for the procession. Sandie Campbell, Choir leader and arranger, helped us to form our co-created music including the rallying and rousing song 'This Land'. Young musician Rufus Rees-Coshan accompanied us with guitar throughout the process, and Simmy Singh, virtuoso violinist, joined us to perform at the event. Local resident and creative producer Becky Burchell led the creative costume, fire torch and headdress workshops to support the community to create their own bespoke costumes and props for the event, which can be used year after year. The Wassail was attended by a mixture of local residents, old and young, close friends of Chettle (e.g. people who work but do not live in the village) and parents and children who were part of the local school Wassail. Chettle resident Liam O'Brien performed the ceremonial role of The Head Apple wonderfully, leading the procession through the village and reading out a very beautiful piece written specially by artist Zoe Laureen

Palmer. The gathering started at the church with speeches and song and instruments played by residents. Some of those performing had never played an instrument in a musical performance previously. Those attending then processed through the village to the orchard, singing the specially written 'Gathering Song', drumming and holding hand-crafted fire torches aloft. Once in the orchard, the revellers paraded three times around the largest apple tree and then came together again to make offerings of (home-made) toast to the trees. Participants then gathered for more songs around the campfire, warmed by soup, cider and apple juice created from the previous year's harvest.

### Impact

- 12 artists (10 new to the organisation)
- 55 community participants (53 new to the organisation)
- 210 community audience

Residents of Chettle have learned how to write their own songs, create their own costumes and play instruments in a performance setting (most of whom have not done any of this previously). The confidence and cohesion this has generated has now inspired the community to bring more ceremonies into other parts of village life (e.g. creating a 'Blackberry Day' to honour the blackberries in Autumn, putting song & dance into Chettle Fete).

100% of those involved said the project was 'Beneficial to the community' 95% said that they had 'learned a new creative skill' and 100% said they would like to 'Continue the tradition in following years'. Photos generated from the event reached wide audiences through local and national media and it was very gratifying for the community to be able to see their efforts recognised and celebrated through these captivating pictures.





*"WOW! I am so proud to have been part of the Wassail!! I was amazed that we managed to write not one, but SIX incredible songs and I even managed to master the sewing machine to create my cloak - a first for me! Thank you to Lorna and all the team for making this happen. When can we do it again?!"*

*"I loved the Wassail because we got to sing songs together and I loved the fire and the violin player."*

*"That was just magical. How all community events should be. It felt important and timeless. Like we were rediscovering lost parts of ourselves. I honestly feel charged up and changed! I can't wait to do it again."*

### **Ensuring an inclusive audience**

We consulted with residents before setting the time for the workshops, to make sure that they were arranged on times/dates that suited the majority of people. We worked with a range of national artists who we felt would bring different skills and perspectives to the workshops. Sam Lee has collected songs from a wide number of Romany and Traveller communities, towards whom there is still a lot of rural racism in our area, so it was valuable to be able to bring their culture and perspective into the process. The event itself was designed to be small-scale, so that we could ensure that those attending were 'participants' rather than spectators, given that the Wassail is a ceremony/ritual rather than a performance - everyone was given song booklets and were invited to dress up. We were delighted that nearly everyone dressed up, or borrowed a head-dress, held a fire torch and everyone joined in the songs.



### **Future legacy**

We hope this ceremony will be an annual event in Chettle and that this will be self-sustaining.

A short film has been made of the project.

<https://vimeo.com/825792746?share=copy>

(password: awake)

Sophie Austin directed this film and is sharing it with a number of short film festivals. We have secured £1,000 to do a premiere screening of the film on Apple Day (1st Oct) in the church, followed by a shared meal in the village hall.

Gobbledegook has had multiple contacts asking about creating other Wassails.

## **5) Emerald Ant CIC**

### **Summary**

£3640 grant awarded for **Research & development** work with Wimborne History Festival, Wimborne Museum and Paper Cinema, towards a performing arts event in 2023 to celebrate Badbury Rings

*"Thank you for valuing the importance of R and D for big projects. The grant enabled us to get to know the local community, our partners and artists in the project area. It has made a tremendous difference to our planning and ability to lever in important project funding."*

### **Beneficiaries**

- 8 artists
- 170 community participants (X new to the organisation)

## Project delivery

The grant has enabled us to:

- 1) Try out technical ideas on Badbury Rings
- 2) Run 2 days' community consultation at Pamphill Dairy, at the Rings car park, and at Museum East Dorset. This was highly successful, with lots of excellent ideas and suggestions that have informed our planning. We also ran a consultation session in Allenbourn School and with volunteers from the National Trust.
- 3) Build a partnership with National Trust Kingston Lacy, to plan and deliver the project. (We obtained £6K partner funding from NTKL and connected with volunteers who we will later rely on.)
- 4) Recruit and engage with 4 schools and 8 artists, who are now planning their artworks.

## Impact

This R and D funding has enabled many people to feed into the planning of Glow Badbury. Over 2 days interfacing with the community, a range of suggestions and ideas have helped form the project, especially in terms of artistic content for 4 separate elements that will engage schools, community groups and local theatre groups, culminating in the final event. E.g. by going into Allenbourn Middle School and consulting with 30 year 6 students, we were able to gauge children's knowledge of the Rings, their connections to it and their ideas for artistic activities they would like to do there.

The final project will make a big difference to the local community. It will have a strong impact on disabled students from Yewstock school, who seldom get opportunities to contribute artistically on more 'mainstream' projects. It will also involve children from Allenbourn, Pamphill and Witchampton First Schools; Years Reception to 4 get very little high quality arts instruction, as it is not a statutory requirements of the national curriculum. Schools often rely on projects like this to provide inspiration and leadership. We expect children's confidence, team skills and life skills to increase through this project, also their performance and musical skills. The project will create positive links for isolated parents and we expect friendships to be formed that may last into the future, building social capital locally and a desire for more similar projects. The project will also offer our partners, National Trust Kingston Lacy and the Museum of East Dorset new ways of working and engaging local communities.

*"This project sounds exciting. Being the Thatcher's wife back in Bankes' Day, I've seen a lot of history in the making & stories"*

*"Would love to see and be part of a community to learn about the history (and mysetery) at such a special space!!! Please include the local schools."*

*Wimborne rarely has exciting outdoor performances like this proposal where all generations can come together to celebrate our fantastic heritage in a burst of creativity. Bring it on...*

*I would love to make 3D action poses of the animals that live there in their natural habitat. Maybe we could draw some birds, or the landscape of BR*

*"Making 3D models of the wildlife and putting a light inside so they glow or playing flutes made out of sticks we carved and wittled. We could make the models more."*

*"I would love to work with artists to create visual art and structures for films and productions because I am a very creative person and would really enjoy this."*



We will be carrying out the following performing arts projects for our illuminated 'Glow Badbury' event:

- Millstream Theatre, a group of adults with learning disabilities, will devise and perform a piece on Badbury Rings inspired by the gathering of 4000 clubmen in 1645.
- Paper Cinema will do a live performance of moving images to music, drawings created by children.
- A musical performance of children's music together with a playing of Vivaldi's Autumn.
- Workshops involving children (disabled and able bodied) in shadow performance using their bodies to convey animals and wildlife of the Rings, providing film footage for the Woodland Cathedral.
- Music Workshops for 'Star Gazing' and a soundscape for the Woodland Cathedral.
- A number of visual arts workshops to create large lantern structures, flags and art work for trees.

#### **Ensuring an inclusive audience**

Through the live performances, we will widen people's awareness and understanding of people with learning disabilities, and help overcome social bias. The event will have audio description and BSL, and we will market it to families with disabled members.

#### **Future legacy**

Thanks to this R and D support, and we now have raised £88,928 funding for our main project 'Glow Badbury'; £78,028 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, £4000 from Dorset Council, and £6000 from our partner, National Trust Kingston Lacy. Our 4 participating schools are also contributing £900.

## **5) Babigloo Music for Babies CIC**

#### **Summary**

£3000 awarded to support Research and Development work with residents of Blandford Camp, to help build trust and a closer relationship with a community identified in need of opportunities for young families. An extension on the grant period was provided due to delays experienced.

***"Thank you as ever DCF for supporting Babigloo again."***

#### **Beneficiaries**

- 110 community participants (all new to the organisation)

#### **Project delivery**

The R and D work followed two successful Babigloo programmes in partnership with the Blandford Children's Centre May-July 2022. We were grateful to Deb Appleby (DCF Trustee) for a pre-meeting and Activity Workers at Blandford Children's Centre who had previous experience of working with the Blandford Camp community. As part of the planning process we attended an Open Evening organised by the Garrison Welfare Service and promoted our work to many families that attended in the first week of the school academic year.

#### **Ensuring an inclusive audience**

We were clear from our initial meetings that the project was aimed at contacting the wide range of nationalities present on the Camp and designed the musical and artistic content to such end. The Music Coordinator we worked with had spent a year in Katmandu and was able to advise on musically and repertoire that enabled us to utilise our unique techniques and artistic provocations.

### Impact

The R and D project supported the arrival of a new Garrison Welfare Officer and their aspiration to audit issues facing families on Blandford Camp. In meeting with key community representatives we introduced Babigloo's non-verbal and inclusive arts practice. This included the Parent and Toddler Group, the Breast Feeding Group and members of the Nepalese, Indian and other nationalities residing on the Camp. Families enjoyed the two sessions we devised and delivered - we engaged with 110 residents during the grant period.

### Future Legacy

We were extremely disappointed to be told that our main contact Craig Hutton was lifted off Camp to another posting in December 2023. The response from children and parents was extremely positive, joyous and inclusive, and we were hopeful that we could make a significant contribution to the experience of family life on Camp and develop our artistic practice by working with such a diverse community.

Continuity of services and care for family life was flagged up as a major concern by the GWO's initial audit of the Camp on his arrival, but despite requests we were not provided with any key bullet points, statistics or information to support our R and D. It proved very difficult to offer any support other than the two sessions we developed and attending the Camp Open Evening. The lasting message we were left with was that 'this is the way it is on Camp'. There is a 50% turnaround in the community every six months and parents are left isolated while their partners are posted elsewhere. We were sorry and disappointed not to be able to play a long term part in supporting the community but hope we may be in contact as we deliver in other venues in North Dorset over the next two years.

However, this process has shown our skill and experience in networking, building support and applying our unique skills to a community in much need but with many barriers to receive outside support.

The work also galvanised our partnership with Dorset Council, Dorset Music Service, Dorset Rural Music School and Youth Music National Charity (additional funding 2024-25 to consolidate Babigloo's work across Dorset).

## **6) The Priest's House Museum Trust**

**Extension to 20/05/2024**

### Summary

£3000 awarded to support Millstream Theatre (theatre group for adults with learning disabilities); introduction of a Creative Arts Masterclass programme to encourage new members and work towards a Cabaret performance.

***"This Performing Arts Grant has been hugely beneficial to Millstream. (DCF Grants Manager) has been extremely friendly, efficient and helpful in correspondence and communication throughout. The extension meant that Millstream's members could pause the Cabaret process in order to participate in Emerald Ant's high profile project, whilst at the same time enjoying the benefits of a prolonged devising and reflection time that the extension allowed."***

### Beneficiaries

- 13 staff (6 new to the organisation)
- 13 community participants (5 new to the organisation)
- 100 audience members



### Project delivery

Our fortnightly Saturday Morning Creative Drama sessions included Creative Arts Masterclasses with visiting Artists to develop a new Cabaret performance – In Harmony. Our visiting Artists included three artists from London based Corali Dance Company, songwriter Helen Porter, performer/magician Kevin Burke, with additional choreography from Holly Cassidy.

We shaped and developed the story over several months to allow time for the group to devise and truly get to know their characters and explore themes which felt important to them. We began the devising process by introducing a collection of postcards. The group were asked to choose an image that they felt drawn to and this provided a starting point for their character. Improvisation, thought-tracking and hot-seating were used to ascertain their back-stories. In this way, pairings and trios were formed, which shaped the middle section of the cabaret. We took time working together on these smaller scenes; discussing what might happen, testing and writing together. As the scenes started to be sketched out, dialogue, poetry and song lyrics emerged, as did a thread for the central story (a much loved café facing closure, whose regulars pulled together to save.) We experimented with physical language and a series of three simple movements was developed for each character which could be used as their motif throughout the play. Helen Porter was able to meet separately with the soloists, either in person or via Zoom, to offer guidance and hone/polish song ideas from group sessions. When each song was complete, Helen provided professionally recorded tracks which gave artistic quality to the songs.

A lengthy devising process allowed time for the consistency, discipline and repetition which are helpful for learning-disabled people as they grow in professionalism. With time and continuity being important, a smaller creative team allowed for artists and companies to return more than once to collaborate and build relationships with Millstream's members. Working with professionals in this way helped individuals play to their strengths, develop new skillsets and gave the confidence to shine.

We invested in a local designer to produce promotional content which we then marketed in person and digitally through Facebook marketing boosted posts. We were able to utilise our contacts with day centres and arts promoters such as Activate, as well as research new audiences e.g. Munsty's, who bought a group of 15 people to the Dorchester performance.

In Harmony premiered at our home at the Museum of East Dorset (previous name The Priest's House Museum Trust) in Wimborne on 13 April 2024, with a second performance at Dorchester Arts Centre on 8 May. The cabaret style of the show involved smaller scenes interwoven with ensemble scenes including the full company.

We now have a brand new Cabaret show which has the potential to be toured across Dorset and elsewhere.

### Ensuring an inclusive audience

Ensuring accessibility for cast members:

- We found that an accessible way to make sure all voices are heard is to use a 'conch' style object for check-ins and group discussions

Millstream Theatre at the MED  
invite you to the Premiere of

# IN HARMONY

**CABARET WITH A DIFFERENCE!**

Harmony's popular cafe is under threat & the regulars are worried. Can Duncan's bright idea save the day?

Enjoy Millstream's exuberant blend of drama, dance, songs, music, comedy and magic - and sample one of Harmony's delicious rock cakes and enjoy a cup of Rosie Lee.

**Saturday, April 13, 2024 at 7pm**  
Museum of East Dorset, BH21 1HH  
(Cafe entrance nr Wimborne Library)

**Wednesday, 8 May 2024 at 2pm**  
Dorchester Arts  
High East Street, DT1 1HF

Tickets free but booking essential:  
[tam@persuasionarts.co.uk](mailto:tam@persuasionarts.co.uk)  
or text: 07968 583401

Tickets: £7/£5  
Box Office: 01305 266926  
[www.dorchesterarts.org.uk](http://www.dorchesterarts.org.uk)

Millstream Theatre MED MUSEUM OF EAST DORSET Dorset Community Foundation Dorchester Arts



- We introduced meditations at the start of our sessions as participants said they found this a useful way to calm minds and level emotions
- We made cue cards for the two comperes as a prompt to remember the order of scenes - there were a lot of lines!
- We provided an easy read option of parts of the script
- We recorded the play in manageable chunks so that as well as receiving a copy of the script, each actor received an aural version of their scenes, to help with line-learning
- For longer rehearsals (close to performances) which impacted on some performers' energy levels, we made sure there were plenty of breaks/time for them to sit out
- Some rehearsals took place over Zoom or in a mutually convenient location



#### Programming:

- We contacted organisations such as People First Dorset to find out best times of the day to schedule performances for Day Centre groups
- We worked with Dorchester Arts' policy on ticket pricing which is reflective of income and what audience members can afford to pay
- We offered a free showcase/premiere performance for those local to Wimborne
- We targeted friends and family of members and disability arts contacts through word of mouth / flyers / MED and DA websites



#### For audiences:

- Movement motif for characters – as an alternative for spoken language
- Makaton was embedded into sections of the play, e.g. for audience participation scenes
- Audio Description and sound were used to make key visual moments accessible
- Costume and Projector – performers were dressed in same costumes as their character

#### Impact

##### The Grant has:

- upskilled participants in dance, singing, magic, and comedy (and technical/backstage skills for 1 member)
- reduced isolation for learning disabled/neurodiverse people by building confidence and making friends
- introduced four new members to Millstream
- encouraged conversations around art and heritage
- provided a new understanding around access for our members
- provided an opportunity for Millstream to see dance by other leaning-disabled artists (Coral Dance Company toured their production of 'Hot Dog' to Pavilion Dance)
- given Millstream the opportunity to perform at a professional Theatre venue (Dorchester Arts)

*"A while ago I lost my zest for acting and wasn't sure what the future had in store but going to Millstream and being involved in how theatre should be accessible, fun and most importantly with a view to showing people how professional we can be in everything undertaken. Just because we have additional needs that doesn't exclude us from equally being a shining star on that stage with everyone else. I've got my mojo back!"*

*"Millstream has given me the confidence to talk to people like you!"*

*"The experience was really amazing and felt like I was immersed in the story of Harmony. What I got out of it is, when we worked like a family and the audience presence was so amazing"*

The grant has positively impacted the wider community at the Museum of East Dorset and beyond by introducing new audiences to Millstream Theatre (both at The Museum of East Dorset and Dorchester Arts) and showcasing what disabled people can achieve given the opportunity. This often exceeds expectations and provides an informative education around access and inclusion. Of the 43 people across both performances who completed audience feedback, 37% had seen Millstream's work previously and 58% were new to us.

*"Having never seen Millstream Theatre perform before, I didn't know quite what to expect – but In Harmony absolutely blew me away! From the very start it was obvious that there was both talent and dedication at work on the stage – the storyline was clever and absorbing, the audience interaction worked a treat, and the bond between the members of the cast shone out for all to see. But it was the tremendous humour and sheer joy of the play that made it sparkle – everyone had obviously studied their characters in great depth and the juxtapositions were hugely original and, in most cases, utterly hilarious, with the odd moment of real pathos adding to the mix."*

Additional outcomes:

- Other disabled people watching the show and taking part in our post-show discussions have felt inspired to try drama for themselves and expressed an interest in joining Millstream
- We were thus able to contribute towards The Museum's 2022 business plan is 'Developing our understanding and relationships with different communities in East Dorset and beyond'.

### **Future Legacy**

We will be seeking funding to provide CPD/Training to our Millstream team and the group to ensure we are using best practice models and to give us and group members a toolkit for tackling the different issues which may arise when working with neurodiverse people. Potentially this training could be offered to the Museum's wider staff team/volunteers to ensure best practice across our community.