



## **Vision for Dance in Plymouth**

Tuesday 6th December 2016, 5.00pm - 8.00pm  
New Continental Hotel, Plymouth

Facilitated by Pawlet Brookes

This report outlines the responses to the 6 questions asked at the event and via an online questionnaire.  
It also identifies the 3 key agreed action points for Plymouth Dance.  
26 people attended the event and 7 people completed the online questionnaire

Information collated and report written by  
June Gamble, Coordinating Producer, Plymouth Dance  
23rd February 2017

## **Plymouth Dance Visioning Day**

The visioning event was really well attended, with a different range of dance practitioners in and around Plymouth. There was a clear strength around inclusive work, and a lot of good practice was shared. There was little evidence of work covering cultural diversity, and there seemed to be a healthy relationship between venues and arts practitioners in terms of the way things were ran. One of the key things that they needed to think about was marketing, media and profile, so people could become more aware of the good work being done by Plymouth Dance, and how they brought the different elements of dance practice together; the need for a coordinating body, that could continue to drill down on raising the profile of dance, and development of work in site specific places and spaces.

Plymouth Dance could coordinate their efforts to create, develop and maintain a website that better showcases the work that they do, with a clear mission statement, or tagline that embraces the message and purpose of the organisation. Furthermore, an annual artistic development event to help nurture and support emerging artists. The next steps would be to look at marketing and sponsorship and future fundraising opportunities.

**Pawlet Brookes**

**Executive Artistic Director**

## Question 1: In your opinion, what Dance is happening in Plymouth?

### **a) Notes from discussion at the event:**

Morris Dancing (Plymouth Morris Men – since 1482)

Plymouth Maids Clog Dancers (Amateur – pubs – collect contributions towards costs and raise money towards charity) – since 1980

Dance every week throughout the year – rehearse October to May. Kick off on 1<sup>st</sup> May at Sun up. Dance in pubs and other venues throughout the year

Always looking for people to join

There is so much happening in the city (Ben Dunks)

Tim Ingram is the Vice Chair of Plymouth/Brest Twinning panel – looking at getting together with Brest (cultural organisations) – exchange

International connections – what are the connections that you may or may not want to make.

Quite a few international connections – city strategy for international connections (Indra)

Attik – Primary Schools, Dance programme (Parkour training for Secondary schools).

Jules Laville, Dance Director, Barbican Theatre, Performance training from 18 months to 25 years. Community events and festivals. Flourish programme – Dance and Theatre. Supported Artists – space. Promoted programme, programme small scale dance at The House and Barbican in partnership with Plymouth Dance and Plymouth University. Work with schools leading up to performances. Force Training Programme for Dance Leaders.

Paula Hocking – Wheelfever & Elder Tree.

Lisa Alford – Active Devon – Sports Partnership – School Games and Seated Exercise (Residential Care Homes)

Clair Beckett – co-director of Far Flung Dance Company – Disabled and non-disabled adults. Training company /Collective. Lead Practitioner at Theatre Royal and Yoga Teacher.

Sarah Farrow Jones - co-director of Far Flung Dance Company – freelance practitioner

Klara – researcher at Plymouth University. National and International colleges.

Sophie Northmore – freelance dancer, performer, acrobat. Far Flung. Researching Dance and Mental Health. Lead Practitioner at Theatre Royal and Exim.

Becky Miles – Practitioner at Barbican Theatre, dancer, performer, aerial dance company. Worked with quite a lot of people in Plymouth.

Heather Walrond – professional touring company that wants to connect internationally. First tour this year. International Projects Coordinator for PD. Company dancer for Exim, Associate Lecturer at Plymouth University.

Sarah Copley – freelance Arts Consultant, fundraising. Project Management and communications. History in Plymouth – Attik Dance 2003. Not based in Plymouth. The journey that has happened since those days – there has been a major shift.

Tammy Mildren – volunteer with Plymouth Dance. Work for Exim Dance Company. Tea Dance with a Twist.

Lauren Pomfret – volunteer. Far Flung. Young Choreographer – Dance in Devon and Pavilion Dance South West.

Laura Henry – AD of Exim Dance Company. Challenge Fund – Plymouth University project. Touring UK with Etch. A lot of Outreach work.

Gemma Smith – Teach Dance in 2 Primary Schools. Volunteer Coordinator for PD. Bollywood. Barbican.

Kirsty – Geraldine Lamb Dance School – oldest private Dance school in Plymouth.

Rosie Perdikeas – freelancer. Project Manager for Dance in Devon. Active Arts for Live (focus on Dance and the Arts). Dementia, Parkinsons, Sight loss.

Lauren Shiels – dance teacher – City College

Amy Chatwin – Pauline Quirke Academy.

South Eastern Society – Dance, Dance, Dance – diverse communities event.

Street Dance

Swing Dance group

Ceroc group

Salsa

Ballet schools

50+ dance

## **b) Results from the online SurveyMonkey questionnaire:**

-Contemporary dance: primary,secondary, university level and professional.

-Contact improvisation

-Ballet, jazz, tap,modern, street and hip-hop all ages.

- integrated dance for all ages and professional opportunities

- Clog and Maurice Dancing

Dance TR1 & 2 - Professional large scale dance / young/adult/disabled/community dance

The Barbican - young/adult/disabled/community dance/ small scale professional dance companies/productions

The House - Plymouth University - small /medium scale dance companies//student performances

There is a lot of community dance and contemporary dance. There is provision for vulnerable groups. There are some great shows of all standards including of the highest standard.

Lots - possibly focusing on younger people?

I'm not sure it's well promoted though and I can't find anywhere that lists all of what's available.

Lots...

Studying of dance in education at all levels - primary, secondary, further and higher education

Community level- children, youth adult and older people's dance classes and training programmes

Choreographic - local and national artists making new works in the city

Performance - local, national and international dance at our theatres

Loads! I am not a practitioner so don't know the name of everything

Dancing for all age groups

Morris Dancing

Clog Dancing

Ballet

Tap

Street

contemporary

Tea Dance

Barbican Theatre

City College

Plymouth University

Theatre

Exim Dance

Far Flung

loads of independent practitioners

Children and youth training

University training (creative dance)

Nice performance programme

community dance.

## Question 2:

### In your opinion, what is working well in the provision of Dance in Plymouth?

#### a) Notes from discussion at the event:

Education is working well but could work better.

**Dance in Secondary schools is struggling – need a citywide strategy – years 7,8 and 9.**

Little bubbles that are happening – more performance opportunity needed (city centre).

Need for jobs within Dance that will inspire people to carry on training it.

City College platform (annually).

Performances to the public and non-dancers (not dancers performing to dancers).

How we are profiling and marketing dance to non-dancers.

Calendar of events that are happening (so that we can mutually market)

**Piazza – a Day of Dance (demonstrate dance to the public) – very successful projects that have utilized the Piazza – sustainability and long term vision for it. That's about resources.**

**Private dance school performances costs are passed on to parents. Would like to get involved more with community events/performances.**

**Inclusive work working well in the city. Unrivalled anywhere else in the country. Don't shout about it or share it well enough. It is extraordinary. Store of knowledge, got to a level of skill and significant history of working with Integrated Dance. Shouting about it and letting other people know about it. Raising profile of something that we are doing well and celebrating them. Expertise lies here.**

**Clair Beckett – training lots of people – next step? Not a lot of paid performance opportunities. Can they access what is already going on.**

As an Artist very rare to find paid professional performance opportunities.

Children in Need Dance project – look to develop it. Look at projects that feed the Plymouth practitioners and share what Plymouth artists do really well. Exchanges.

**Quality of the work that comes into the city is particularly good – across the range of Dance. Fantastic diet of Dance that we have here at all scales. Programming is good and venues are good. Barbican struggles financially – not funded to put performances on. Barbican programmes at The House.**

**It's important to keep the range – less is more...**

Heather Walrond - Emerging choreographer – travel to see work. Hard financially anyway – no input for professional development – Masterclasses and CPD.

Structure of Masterclasses and CPD affects the interest. If that goes, it moves somewhere else. Teaching reduced. Won't have people interested.

Carnival used to be really successful at gaining funding for their programming – look outside of the box – re. partnerships and relationships that they need to.

Who do we want to work with and who do we not want to work with.

What the gaps are? Sustainability? Tourism.

Financial comfort zone – has gone and is shrinking. What partnerships, what are the gaps. What's the deal.

Have to put a value on what we do. We can't give as freely anymore.

**We are in a position to get a business partner in to sponsor a show (ethical question).**

**Sponsorship – joined up projects – joined up Corporate Sponsorship projects.**

Diversity – part of what goes on. We are a long way from Urban Britain. Black work is not just for Black audiences.

Class/Economic Diversity - we hit the full range within the city. **Map and celebrate**

**More refugee work.**

**Contact with Dance schools and teachers of dance in schools.**

## **b) Results from the online SurveyMonkey questionnaire:**

- A variety of styles for all ages and abilities.
- Professional space and theatres
- Integrated Dance: Plymouth has multiple opportunities for disabled and non disabled performers to work together from an early age through to professional level

Plymouth Dance, Plymouth University, Barbican & independent local dance practitioners/companies have established good working partnerships producing a diverse range of dance.

Community dance and some great performances to watch.

Liaison between the various organisations and practitioners  
Opportunities for CPD and to see visiting groups

Support from PD for both individuals and organisations  
Variety of classes and genres on offer  
A variety of performances throughout the year - suits all tastes

Inclusive practice  
Youth training  
Programming dance

### Question 3:

## In your opinion, what is missing in the provision of Dance in Plymouth - where are the gaps?

### a) Results from the online SurveyMonkey questionnaire:

- In the meeting we were informed of the possibility of losing Dance performances from venues due to funding, if this were to happen this would leave a huge gap in Dance development. It is essential for small/medium size companies to share their work in the City as it offers a broader sense of dance work as a whole. Often these companies offer workshops and performance opportunities with them, which would be devastating to lose for both professional and aspiring dancers.

Having worked as a dance practitioner with a focus on rural parts of Devon, mainly West & South Devon and just having moved into Plymouth I know the dance landscape less in terms of 'gaps' in Plymouth but tend to hear less generally about Dance and Health and Intergenerational work, although, I am aware of the current 'Tea Dance with a Twist' project for older people and those with long term health conditions.

There needs to be more provision for adults who have some experience in dance but haven't done it for some time due to caring and working responsibilities (bringing up children, careers etc). I.E. Not for complete beginners but for people who have a background in dance but aren't professional or perhaps up-to-date. There also needs to be more provision of diverse, international forms of dance for participation. E.g. there is some Latin dance and a little Middle Eastern dance but almost no African.

Are all genres catered for?

A professional class (without students - I don't want to take class with people I teach!)

A dance festival - a week of dance in the city where professional work, graduate work, workshops and masterclasses, lectures happen.

Like U Dance but for all dance practitioners. All the organisations in the city join together and create a unique dance experience - there is not one happening in the UK. It would feed audience numbers, raise aspirations and develop professional practice.

I don't know enough about Dance to comment.

Sharing the dance produced at Plymouth - outreach to a wider community.

Barbican is doing well, but we need more non-dancers to participate in watching dance - schools, communities, etc... That would create also more possibilities for a local company to perform on a more regular basis.

The house is a beautiful venue, but not many even know that it is a theater.

Being more attractive as a destination to come for a workshop, dance festival, dance event...

Professional training outside the University - the trouble is about scheduling and attendance and a habit of attendance of practitioners. The workshop runs low in numbers many times - a shame. Same with continuous program of morning classes. There should be at least few opportunities a week for professional development.



## Question 4:

**In your opinion, what is missing in the provision of Dance in Plymouth for you as a Practitioner/Producer?**

### **a) Notes from discussion at the event:**

**Key practitioners to get together and share practice – how do we fund that? – 1 meetings a year – co-designed**

Setting up a company – business mentoring.

### **b) Results from the online SurveyMonkey questionnaire:**

As I have just moved into Plymouth my experience working in Plymouth as a dance practitioner/producer is minimal so at present I unable to comment.

See above.

N/A

The above

NA

Active network of exchange.

## Question 5:

**Please add any POSITIVE statements or comments that you might like to share/make with regard to Dance in Plymouth:**

### **a) Results from the online SurveyMonkey questionnaire:**

Overall it has been exciting to see so much Dance happening in Plymouth and The South West which will hopefully keep increasing year upon Year.

Innovative & good partnership working  
Accessible and user friendly website

Advertise and market a wide and diverse range of dance opportunities; across Plymouth, the south West region and beyond helping to keep connected with the dance world at large

There is a lot going on. There is a lot of enthusiasm and passion. There are several groups doing great work. There are new initiatives and up and coming practitioners.

The colleagues I come across are a pleasure to work with

- we have an eclectic mix of dance happening in the city
- we have fantastic Dance spaces
- we have a wealth of dance knowledge and experience in terms of dance teachers/leaders/educators

There is an incredible number of inclusive practice companies in the city. What about organizing a festival that promotes, shows and educates. Workshops, shows, practice sharing. On level of community, training, professional career - I guess that could be a topic that brings together many different parties.

### **b) POSITIVES - Captured on postcards at the event:**

The high quality of masterclasses and professional development offered to Artists and practitioners in the city would be greatly missed if the wide variety of dance programming disappeared. This creates a place to train but also network as practicing artists and teachers, it also brings variety and diversity and inspiration from companies based in different parts of the country.

Plymouth Dance needs to be the joining up of all dance in Plymouth - creating greater visibility and opportunities for different organisations/sectors/communities to come together.

Communication in dance is good but needs to be better.

Have mass days of dance in city centre - collect for a charity. Give time free.

Have annual meeting to discuss how things are going, snags and points.

Group funding application - i.e., apply for sponsorship as a group. Perhaps use SUPPORTED BY rather than SPONSORED BY.

It would be a loss for the city to not show/host small and midscale dance work...we're good at the big programs, the big shows...it's excellent to be able to see quality large companies but that doesn't represent the diverse offer that dance has...the new makers, new creations...new minds. And very importantly for me the young artists/not necessarily in age/but the dance artist finding their voice.

#PLdance both Twitter and Facebook

Stop working in our little bubbles. Remember the \*EU will survive. \*Every one United in Dance and Music.

Categories form to complete for PD - time? Age? Ability? Getting out of the city. Classes/workshops/performances.

## Question 6:

**Please add any NEGATIVE statements or comments that you might like to share/make with regard to Dance in Plymouth:**

### **a) Results from the online SurveyMonkey questionnaire:**

No comment to make at this stage

Just around the variety of forms of dance - as above - and access for adults who are not vulnerable or beginners.

Quality facilities are limited or not cost effective to enable activity to be sustainable

- it can be seen as a segregated community with obvious cliques
- there is little understanding of each other's work and expertise and this feeds the segregation

Lack of advance/ adult/professional practices around and sharing of local artists.

### **b) NEGATIVES - Captured on postcards at the event:**

Workshops from experienced companies in the city offering mentoring/training in starting up, writing bids, the ins and outs of running a company

What is Plymouth Dance's priority? Is it to support Dance Companies, practitioners, teachers, students or to gain funding for projects which are offered out to practitioners to apply for? Is it both? Is it Plymouth Dance running in house projects offered to carefully chosen practitioners? I am genuinely confused.

Clarity around what the role of Plymouth Dance is? - an umbrella organisation? - a support organisation? - producer? - profiling/PR dance in the city?

More opportunity for high quality workshops and dance to be accessed at a primary level and more opportunity for primary children to 'go & see' high quality work as well as those at secondary - they therefore are more integrated and involved in that culture from early on.

Professional older dancers classes/workshops. Technique and creative. A good old chance to dance weekly term time. Rotation of practitioners.

Hikikomori - Pulling back from going forward. Hermit Syndrome

## **ACTIONS AGREED AT THE EVENT:**

- 1. Sponsorship - set up a Working Group to look at collective Sponsorship strategy**
- 2. Annual Artist Development Event - set up a Working Group to develop and organise an Annual Dance Gathering**
- 3. Website – list everything – review website  
To encourage the use of #PLdance on Twitter and Facebook**
- 4. Review and develop Programming Strategy for Dance in Plymouth**
- 5. Shout, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally about Inclusive Dance practice in the city**