

Wiltshire Creative: Salisbury City Council Annual Report – 14th October 2019

2018/19

The 1st February 2018 saw the merger of Salisbury Playhouse, Salisbury Arts Centre and Salisbury International Arts Festival creating Wiltshire Creative. The financial year (2018/2019) was a transition year for the coming together of the 3 legacy organisations. This report refers to the Take Part work of the merged organisation, which incorporates that of the 3 legacy organisations.

Salisbury City Council' s support of the Take Part programme at Wiltshire Creative remains crucial to the range of opportunities available to Salisbury City Residents of all ages.

Over 9,000 people participated in activities across Salisbury City.

The Take Part programme breaks down into 3 strands:

1. Creative Learning

This strand supports our ambition as a centre for creative and life-long learning, ensuring engagement from Early Years to Higher Education and beyond, prioritising those educational organisations in areas of social and cultural deprivation.

2. Community

Our key objective is to contribute to the health and well-being of Salisbury and Wiltshire communities. We achieve this by working with priority groups of children and young people as identified by our stakeholders. We also engage and work with elders, adults who are learning and physically disabled and those whose mental health is at risk.

Our Early Years offer has developed in a number of ways during this year of change. We have introduced a monthly FREE creative session at Salisbury Arts Centre called smARTies. We welcome over 30 people for each session to play and create together. We also deliver this activity offsite during the year in targeted areas such as the Friary and Bemerton Heath and also incorporate it into other events e.g. The Royal

Wedding event and SCC *Fundays*. This ensures we enable as many people as possible to take part in arts activities.

We have created an early years' movement-based class *Story Time Movers* which has proved popular and different from other opportunities in the city. Our own Christmas early years production, *THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS*, was enhanced by a FREE activity pack and associated workshops which were delivered to targeted groups. We now run craft workshops alongside many visiting productions and in partnership with Salisbury Library.

Weekly workshops in the arts for older people continue to offer a creative outlet and social network for many in the local community. This group enjoys a range of activities with arts professionals as well as creating their own work, which they often share with their peers in professional arts venues as well as medical centres and care homes. This year they created a performance exploring the Japanese Artform of *Butoh* which they performed at Salisbury Arts Centre as part of THEATRE FEST WEST.

3. Youth Arts

We strive to ensure that young voices make a genuine artistic contribution to our artistic programme and we offer unique opportunities for young people in Salisbury in a range of artforms across both venues. Young people work with professional writers, choreographers, performers, visual artists and directors in developing new work and re-imagining existing work, so it speaks to their experience and furthers the voice of young people in the city and beyond. We ensure that Salisbury Playhouse is harnessing the vision and ambition of local young people as well as engaging them as ambassadors for our work.

We continue to reduce or remove financial barriers to accessing the arts through our Youth Arts Bursaries and our Open Doors Fund. Whereas the bursaries offered on Youth Arts activity relieve pressure on membership fees of our youth groups, such as Jigsaw (SAC) and Stage 65 (SPH), our Open Doors Fund provides the resource for people to participate where there may be an associated financial costs - e.g. travel, childcare or 1:1 learning support

Our drama group at Exeter House SEN (Special Educational Needs) School in Salisbury continues, offering a range of creative workshops specifically designed for

young people with profound and multiple learning disabilities. Students are keen to join, having experienced the work and excitement of their peers, especially in their annual performance in the Salberg at Salisbury Playhouse. This work has enabled us to welcome young people with additional needs or disabilities in the majority of our weekly workshops in our other Youth Theatre locations. These young people are assisted by our volunteer young practitioners and, where appropriate, a support practitioner, to support their full participation in activities. This includes performance opportunities where casts consist of young people of all backgrounds and abilities.

Zone Arts at SAC, which caters for individuals with learning difficulties, continues to run and benefits from performance platforms at various events including LIFT OFF!

2018 saw the formal launch of the organisation with LIFT OFF! over the August Bank Holiday weekend. Despite a couple of days of bad weather, an estimated 13,000 people enjoyed the range of work, from music and fireworks in the Cathedral Close and free street performances in the city centre to a Family Fiesta at the Arts Centre, theatre performances from community groups at the Playhouse and a visual arts trail across the city.

Progress update 2019/20

Older People

Mind the Gap for the over 60s continues and is now experiencing a wider range of artforms and opportunities. They experienced a new audio visual production exploring the deserted village of IMBER - a first for most and we were pleased that we received overwhelmingly positive feedback. They also reflected on their own memories of the Moon Landings through a project linked to the International Arts Festival using visual arts and poetry. They are now working towards a performance at Christmas where we will invite care home residents and day centre users to enjoy.

A request for a Cinema Club has come out of our county wide older peoples project CELEBRATING AGE and will complement our Silver Screenings at Salisbury Arts Centre. This social event addresses the concern that there will be no one to connect

with for those attending alone with the benefit of a well-priced lunch alongside their cinema ticket.

We will celebrate NATIONAL DAY OF ARTS IN CARE HOMES on the 24th September 2019 by taking a Dance Practitioner on a small tour of Salisbury care homes to lead a session of movement.

Young People

In addition to our developing Youth Arts programme, the return of Salisbury International Arts Festival this year provided the chance to create unique opportunities of connecting young people with the dynamic and varied programme. *Moonsongs* opened the Festival with the sound of over 200 children singing songs specially commissioned for them. We hosted 2 FREE FAMILY FIESTAS and a Schools STEAM visual art exhibition.

Inclusion

We strive to represent our whole community in our programme and participatory activities and that inclusive approach is a constant. Opportunities at Exeter House SEN School continue and increase with the school taking part in our Primary Schools project *Beginners Please!* for the first time this year.

The Zone Arts group for individuals with learning disabilities based at Salisbury Arts Centre continues to provide broad creative experiences with specialist practitioners and equipment. We have been able to provide the specialist practitioners with CPD training and opportunities as well as continuing to offer performance platforms for the group.

Our Youth Theatre has recently presented their version of *Wizard of Oz* to rave reviews featuring an integrated cast.

Bemerton Heath

We offer activities to the most disadvantaged, isolated and vulnerable communities. We have a focused approach in Bemerton Heath, consulting with the Salisbury City Community Development team, the Residents Association and local schools. With these partners we are developing an ongoing programme of activities tailored to the

needs of the community through taster sessions and consultation. In taking part in drama sessions, the after-school club expressed an interest in a Youth Theatre based in Bemerton Heath. As a result, we have just run the first couple of sessions there. Our main artistic programme also includes Bemerton Heath, through a programme of family performances in the Neighbourhood Centre. We are now researching other appropriate venues. Salisbury International Arts Festival also reached out to the Bemerton Heath residents with a free FAMILY FIESTA resulting in extremely positive feedback and a desire for more such activities.

Louise Dancy

Take Part Director

27th September 2019