

Appendix 5 Detailed Feedback from dancefest



30 July 2013

Dear Mr Ligema,

Thank you for your letter requesting feedback from Dancefest regarding the review of the arts commissioning grants. I think it is important to say everyone understands that very difficult decisions have to be made by local authorities and government departments.

General points

- Funding from Herefordshire Council demonstrates support for the quality, ethos and goals of the organisation
- It demonstrates support to other potential funders
- Having the Herefordshire Council logo on marketing tools demonstrates to the general public the belief in the quality of work
- Small organisations face tough competition to get funding from charities, trusts, individual donors and sponsors

Withdrawing or reducing Herefordshire Council support from the arts:

- Reduces the social impact of the arts to local communities
- Reduces the impact of the arts to physical and mental wellbeing of people who take part
- Reduces the opportunity for children and young people to develop skills
- Endangers livelihoods
- Reduces the economic input provided by the arts
- Reduces the value of the arts to tourism
- Demonstrates a lack of belief in the value of culture to society

From our organisation's perspective Herefordshire Council's input of £4,500 was 4.4% of grant aid received in 2012-13. Although not a large proportion it was very important in terms negotiating our NPO status with the Arts Council who value our provision in the county. At a time when government funding to ACE is being reduced by 5% and there will be another very difficult round of funding to maintain NPO status for 2015-2018, it will be crucial for Dancefest to be able to demonstrate Herefordshire Council support.

In 2012 – 13, Dancefest's direct expenditure to deliver its Herefordshire programme was just under £35,000, whilst the income generated was £27,000. The Dancefest Board has long acknowledged the difficult financial situation faced by the organisation in Herefordshire, but has demonstrated its belief and commitment to the work by continuing. However as the situation worsens we could not continue to invest in staffing and delivering a programme that creates a financial risk for the organisation.

Dancefest is based at The Courtyard (CYD): This gives Dancefest a strong focus in the arts across Herefordshire. The base is vital for networking opportunities with other organisations including the Courtyard to continue to develop exciting and innovative projects. For example 'Wye Tea Dance', an older persons project supported by the Courtyard and led by Dancefest. Other collaborations made possible by our presence at The Courtyard include The MusicPool, who were heavily involved with the Jigsaw Project, 2Faced Dance Company, The CYD's older person's coordinator, the education manager and the drama department. The CYD base also assists with promotion through the marketing department.

Dancefest outlook with funding reduction

Dancefest currently employs a p/t coordinator (17 hours) and a dance worker (18 hours) in Herefordshire. These posts enable projects, performances and a regular participatory programme to take place all of which would be endangered if these posts ceased to exist.

The following workshops/ projects and performances would cease to continue as they exist now:

- **The Jigsaw Project:** This is integral to the work of Dancefest Herefordshire with huge reach and engagement to over 140 people of all ages and abilities. This is a unique opportunity in Herefordshire and is not duplicated elsewhere. Herefordshire community and school groups benefit hugely from this biennial dance and disability performance particularly those with a physical or learning disability who achieve not only creatively through the project but also as performers in a professional venue (the CYD).
 - The total number of project attendances was more than 2000 throughout the project.
 - 700 people saw the performances including local school children, parents, friends and family.
 - The exit routes into successful weekly community classes for young people take place in Hereford.
 - On average 130 children, young people and adults with varying disabilities benefit from this unique project.

School projects that promote out of school community opportunities:

2012-13 events to which Dancefest initiated or contributed:

- Moving Targets: creative projects culminating in 2 performances at the Courtyard, working in partnership with Whitecross High School
- The Jigsaw Project: 2 performances at the Courtyard working in partnership with The Music Pool with Blackmarston and Marlbrook Primary, Westfield, The Brookfield School and Dancefest community groups
- Spill: As part of The cultural Olympiad Dancefest organised performances of this production for playgrounds to be performed in Ledbury and Hereford and which had associated workshops

Projects/workshops for older people in Herefordshire:

- Moving Pictures: Out in rural communities.
- Chance to Dance weekly sessions
- Workshops in residential homes
- One off special projects

Regular participation for Children/ young people/ adults /older people:

- Children's classes in urban and rural Herefordshire
- Young people's dance groups and youth companies
- Adult contemporary / choreography/creative dance workshops.
- Inclusive dance workshops for disabled and non disabled dancers.
- Older people's sessions- creative movement/dance in residential settings
- One off special workshops with visiting professional dance companies to The Courtyard- young people/adults.

Site specific performances

- Dancefest have become synonymous with large scale community projects which are one-off, very wide-reaching and special for all involved (e.g. Forbidden a Tale of love and War at Goodrich Castle in 2008). These unique performance opportunities are especially important for those people living in more rural isolated Herefordshire communities such as Goodrich/Ross where the social side and local opportunity is as important as the performance. Over 100 schools and community performers worked together alongside professional dancers.

Future plans

- Youth Dance Tour: 3 performances visiting 3 Secondary schools throughout Herefordshire (spring 2014), involving young people performing to their peers
- Big Dance: Dancefest has been invited to be the lead organisation for the West Midlands part of this national Project, Just waiting to hear about funding, success would mean a week of activities in Herefordshire in 2014 and 16, the opportunity for local dance workers to be part of a large choreographic project that will tour the region, schools and community groups being part of the national pledge in 2015
- Dance Squad: Dancefest has applied to the National Lottery for funding for a 2 year Dance Squad project which if successful will employ 2 dance workers 1 day a week to work with children, young and older people in projects that link dance and health.
- Dancefest is the lead organisation in a consortium of three that includes 2Faced Dance Company that has been awarded funding from Arts Council England's Catalyst programme. This offers organisational development and training geared towards

To summarise I feel that the return on Herefordshire Council's investment in Dancefest is enormous financially, culturally and socially. Dancefest in turn is part of the wider arts, education and community sector that provides a programme that benefits the local population as well visitors.

I would be happy to discuss the issues further.

Yours sincerely,

Rose Beeston
Manager