


<p>People's Company</p> <p>Charity No. 1199022</p> <p>Trustee Annual Report 2023/2024</p>	
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Purpose of the charity

The advancement of the arts and the education of the public in the appreciation and understanding of performing arts in all their forms, through the operation, facilitation and management of People's Company theatre for the public benefit.

Activities

The Outreach project, which had just commenced training at the end of the last financial year, was successfully completed. The purpose of the project was to train facilitators from People's Company to run sessions in drama, writing and story-telling techniques, with groups formed from across the community, and their offering performed on stage at Southwark Playhouse. The groups were widely differing, consisting of Arts for Dementia; a homeless group; a South American dance group; a mixed race and intergenerational group of locals; several people from the Company's waiting list who were interested in writing came together to form a cohort and a group of people with Autism were also originally intended to be part of the project.

The project outcome exceeded all expectations. The actual performance was incredible, being moving, funny, informative and story-telling at its best. Many involved had never been involved in theatre or on a stage, but they performed beautifully and very movingly. The feedback from the groups to their Facilitators about the training and the actual staging was extremely positive and it showed in their performances - people doing what most had never done before with confidence and brio - to a very responsive audience.

Individually, the Facilitators learned a great deal about working in the community, how to bring unknown people together, to bind them as a team, to tease their stories out, to direct and shape performances and, in some instances, how to cope with disordered or less stable lives and, in this process, also learned a lot about themselves. The task was challenging for almost all Facilitators, mainly being new to this process, with hurdles to be overcome on a weekly basis by some groups, whether it was a working mother with childcare problems or homelessness issues. Despite best efforts, the Autistic client group did not materialise, but provided insight into arranging future sessions for people who struggle managing routines. A lot of lessons were learned about all aspects of Outreach, which will be taken on board in future projects.

One participant became a member of People's Company, off the back of the Outreach programme, and is involved in the current production's rehearsals.

The second tranche of the Outreach session commenced just prior to year end and will be reported on in the next annual return.

'Black Box ', a performance of short plays and monologues, written, performed and directed by PC members was staged in August 2023, in front of a sold-out audience. The overall direction of this piece was undertaken by one member (who is also the Deputy OpCom Chair) for the first time, rather than the Artistic Director, empowering more directorial talent and freeing the AD for further tasks. Established Company members were able to build on previous work undertaken in composing, performing and directing in smaller groups, with new members bringing skills to the fore and writing pieces for the first time. The performance was extremely well received and provided the Company with revenue from the Box Office.

People's Company continued in partnership with several local community groups, with cast members performing short pieces at their events or during animated walks, which provided an opportunity for partial try-out of scenes from plays being written and characterisation of individuals.

We consider that we have achieved our objective of providing a creative voice and platform for the people of Southwark in the past year, both within People's Company and by external work in the community with PC members, specifically:

(1). The Outreach project was a new prospect for the Company and several of its members as they were trained in Facilitation to bring drama techniques to the wider community. Much of what is taught in drama can bring well-being and confidence to people's lives, but many people do not think of ever attending theatre, or a theatre group. Instead, it was decided to take it out of the theatre space directly to small groups in the community, exposing such skills to them on site and rounding it off back in the theatre space with a performance. It was a learning experience for virtually everyone involved and the feedback from participants ranged from 'challenging, supportive, empowering, representative, hard work, fun'. Seeing people on stage in front of a live audience, feeling confident, enjoying themselves, telling their stories and entertaining the viewers made the Trustees feel extremely content. The second phase of this project is currently underway.

(2) 'Black Box continued a previous theme of empowering Company members to write short pieces, forming small groups to enact said pieces and with an appointed director for those who wished to try out directing skills. Some of the newer members were encouraged to put forward written pieces, joining current members who had past experience of this format. Overall direction was undertaken by a Company member (which was a first not directly led by the AD for the Company) and she did a wonderful job of pulling it all together in a sold out night at the Playhouse.

(3) New members have joined Peoples' Company, some via the Outreach project. We only wish we could take more, but are limited by our rehearsal space size.

Future productions

It is the intention of the Artistic Director to perform two major pieces and one smaller/shorter performance annually. The current project is 'Once Upon a Market', which Company members devised and has involved the Writers' group, the Cast and with other members of PC involved in backstage and production activities. It is still in rehearsal mode for a 4 night run at Southwark Playhouse at the end of June 2024 and will be reported on more fully in the next annual return.

Work is also in progress for the future major production, 'Bermondsey and Rotherhithe through Song', hopefully to be staged in the new year, with the project currently being fleshed out and funding sought. This is a large project encompassing a new music-narrated play, an exhibition,

heritage training, a choral evening, an animated tour and arranged talks, and is being organised in conjunction with Bermondsey and Rotherhithe Tenants & Residents' Association.

Other

The Operating Committee was fully operational by January 2024 and is functioning in an organised and involved manner, being manned by members of the Company, all with formal job descriptions, which has strengthened the management structure.

Joseph Fiennes very kindly agreed to become the Patron of People's Company. He came and spent an evening with the whole Company, to better understand the ethos of the Company. It was a relaxed evening, allowing the Company to quiz him and Joe to listen to the members and he has promised to be an active Patron, openly seeking commitment. We are very grateful for his input in what is a busy working and family life.

Finance

As usual, most of our income came from funders such as local charities, local community funds or in conjunction with another community group. Again this year we received part of the box office receipts for 'Black Box', our second year of receiving payment for performances. We have this year some restricted funds to carry over, as the Outreach project, part 2, continues into the next financial year. We continue to seek a matrix of funders for our projects and in this context we have joined with Kaleidoscope BME Festival, with whom we work in partnership on a variety of events, to fund the (currently in rehearsal) production of 'Once upon a Market'.

Trustees

We are very happy to say that we not only recruited a replacement Trustee, Lucy Moore, but Lorraine Hilton also agreed to join the board. We are very grateful to both of them for volunteering their service. Unfortunately, Lucy has recently had to resign, due to new work commitments. We will continue with our current 4 trustees.

(People's Company Trustees

Annual report to the Charity Commission 2023/2024)

Chair's Report, 2023/2024

This has once again been an interesting year for People's Company as we moved into our second year as a CIO, with several different strands of activities occurring during the year, several of which were 'firsts' in the Company's history.

Activities

The production of 'Black Box' was a first, in that the Artistic Director (John Whelan) did not lead the production. Instead, Mary Hayden undertook the overall direction of this performance of short plays and monologues, all written, performed and directed by PC members. Established Company members were able to build on previous work undertaken in composing, performing and directing in smaller groups, with new members bringing skills to the fore and writing pieces for the first time. The performance was extremely well-received, plus providing the Company with revenue from the Box Office and Mary did a stellar job of pulling it together.

Mary was appointed Director of 'Once Upon a Market', a piece devised, written and staged by members of People's Company, which will be performed over 4 nights at Southwark Playhouse at the end of June 2024. Mary's role in stepping up to direct productions, together with her role supporting John as Deputy OpCom chair, has relieved a burden on John as both Artistic Director and Chair of the OpCom.

Our first Outreach project, which had just commenced training at the end of the last financial year, was successfully completed. The purpose of the project was to train facilitators from People's Company to run sessions in drama, writing and story-telling techniques, with groups formed from across the community, and their offering performed on stage at Southwark Playhouse. The groups were widely differing, consisting of Arts for Dementia; a homeless group; a South American dance group; a mixed race and intergenerational group of locals; several people from the Company's waiting list who were interested in writing came together to form a cohort and a group of people with Autism were also originally intended to be part of the project.

The project outcome exceeded all expectations. The actual performance was incredible, being moving, funny, informative and story-telling at its best. Many involved had never been involved in theatre or on a stage, but they performed beautifully and very movingly. The feedback from the groups to their Facilitators about the training and the actual staging was extremely positive and it showed in their performances - people doing what most had never done before with confidence and brio - to a very responsive audience.

Individually, the Facilitators learned a great deal about working in the community, how to bring unknown people together, to bind them as a team, to tease their stories out, to direct and shape performances and, in some instances, how to cope with disordered or less stable lives and, in this process, also learned a lot about themselves. The task was challenging for almost all Facilitators, being new to this process, with hurdles to be overcome on a weekly basis by some groups, whether it was a working mother with childcare problems or homelessness issues. Despite best efforts, the Autistic client group did not materialise, but provided insight into arranging future sessions for people who struggle managing routines. A lot of lessons were learned about all aspects of Outreach, which will be taken on board in future projects.

Several people who were involved as participants joined People's Company as members, off the back of the Outreach programme and are involved in the current project which is in rehearsal.

The second tranche of the Outreach session commenced just prior to year end and will be reported on in the next annual return.

Operating Committee

The Operating Committee was fully appointed and functioning well. With the new organisation in place, manned by PC members now with job descriptions, there is a more formal structure to the Company, which has strengthened the Company's management and also relieved the burden on the Artistic Director. The Trustees are very grateful to the members who have undertaken these tasks to enable PC to manage the Company.

Patron

Joe Fiennes very kindly agreed to become the Patron of People's Company. He came and spent an evening with the whole Company, so he could understand the ethos of the Company. It was a

relaxed evening, allowing the Company to quiz him and Joe to listen to the members and he has promised to be an active Patron, openly seeking commitment. We are very grateful for his input in what is a busy working and family life.

Finance

The Treasurer will report more fully on Finance, but as usual, most of our income came from funders such as local charities, local community funds or in conjunction with another community group. Sheik will report on his suggested funding activities during the meeting. Again this year we received part of the box office receipts for 'Black Box', our second year of receiving payment for performances.

Trustees

Lucy Moore and Lorraine Hilton joined as Trustees during the financial year and we are very grateful for their services. Sadly, Lucy has recently resigned due to unforeseen work commitments. As we have 4 Trustees, we will stay with this number and not replace Lucy.

All the Trustees join me in wishing to extend our sincere thanks to John Whelan for all his strategy, insight and efforts for the Company, and to Mary Hayden for taking on her new role on the OpCom supporting John and, not least, for her Directorial debut for PC. We are also extremely grateful to all members of the Operating Committee for their commitment to the Company. We appreciate everything that is done to make People's Company successful.

	People's Company Annual Accounts (23/24), year end 30 April 24		
	b/f cash from year 22-23	12,011.46	
	Assets (Cash)	12,011.46	
	Assets, debts, liabilities, payroll, etc.	0.00	
	Total Assets		12,011.46
	Income		
	Black Box' production, box receipts	817.20	
	Southwark Council funding	1,383.00	
	Kaleidoscope funding towards 'Once upon a market'	220.92	
	Annual income total	2,421.12	2,421.12
	Payments inward		
	Kaleidoscope share of zoom	51.96	
	FoPP share of zoom	51.96	
	Total payments inward	103.92	103.92
	Outgoings		
	Outreach Project, Phase 1		
	PM, application/formation	600.00	
	PM	1,200.00	
	evaluation	600.00	
	Resources	302.37	
	Rehearsal space	920.00	
	Facilitation	2,368.00	
	Performance: stagehand	50.00	
	Performance: Theatre hire	250.00	
	Performance: Comp tickets	300.00	
	Total, Phase 1	6,590.37	6,590.37
	Outreach Project, Phase 2		
	Resources	18.55	
	Rehearsal space	80.00	
	Total, Phase 2	98.55	98.55
	Black Box Production		
	Rehearsal space	400.00	
	Programmes	66.75	
	Gift for director	32.00	
	Total, Black Box	498.75	498.75
	Once Upon a Market Production		
	Writers' group first meeting	22.30	
	Research/books	68.50	
	Script print	130.12	
	Total, OUAM	220.92	220.92
	Admin/General		
	Annual insurance	200.77	
	zoom	155.88	
	Website	135.00	
	Google storage/3 months	5.99	
	Meeting room hires for Committee and Trustees	110.00	
	Admin supplies	4.75	
	Transport	20.92	

	Disposal of old set	80.00	
	Total Admin	713.31	713.31
	Summary Outgoings		
	Outreach Phase 1	(6,590.37)	
	Outreach Phase 2	(98.55)	
	Black Box Production	(498.75)	
	Once Upon a Market Production	(220.92)	
	Admin/General	(713.31)	
	Total outgoings YTD	(8,121.90)	(8,121.90)
	Summary all income		
	Annual income	2,421.12	
	Payments inward	103.92	
	Total outgoings	(8,121.90)	
	b/f cash from previous year	12,011.46	
	Cash on hand	6,414.60	
	Reserved funding (Outreach project)	(3,083.10)	
	Unrestricted cash on hand	3,331.50	
	For approval at AGM on 11 June 2024		
	Appointed Trustee (Mina Temple)		
	Treasurer (Shelagh Farren)		