


<p>People's Company</p> <p>Charity No. 1199022</p> <p>Trustee Annual Report 2024/2025</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

Several months consumed the group with the preparation and performance of a full cast play, *Once Upon A Market*. Funded by Kaleidoscope, a local community BME group, this play was based on stories of traders from East Street market, their journeys to the country, journeys of life and their histories and particularly Prince Monolulu, a racing tipster and the first black man on the BBC. The full Company was employed in this production, from researching lives at the archives, interviewing people, writing of dialogue and compilation into the script, editing and then into the rehearsal period, with the appropriate stage management, plus props and costume production. Following on from the previous year, the Artistic Director handed the direction of this piece over to a Company Member, as an ongoing intent to provide directorial experience to members interested in this tranche of the dramatic arts. Unfortunately, due to the originally scheduled date being changed by the Playhouse, several members of the cast had to withdraw during rehearsal and the piece slimmed down. However, those members were involved with producing the piece in other ways, just not able to make the actual performance, which shone to 3 nights at Southwark Playhouse.

Completion of Phase 2 of the Outreach programme was carried over from the previous year. In line with our funder's wishes, we targeted an established group already funded by them and whom they thought would be interested and would benefit from the sessions. Regrettably, this proved not to be the case as the numbers from this group were low and the uptake was not great. Due to time constraints we were then unable to establish sessions within the funding period and we returned the underspend to the funder.

To celebrate PC's 10th anniversary, a one night performance was organised at Southwark Playhouse in February 2025. Playing to a full house, it was a mix of new writing and vintage pieces, monologues, short plays and ended with a song. It was a total company involvement, with a new tranche of members facing their first performance. Members who were interested in writing were given the theme of 'Forward' for short plays, and they pitched their work in front of a panel. Some company members opted to take over the direction of the three short plays chosen. Several ex-members returned to perform in monologues and vintage pieces and with so many diverse groups rehearsing in differing locations, we were fortunate to have a Trustee, who is an actress, attend some rehearsals to offer feedback. The whole production was then pulled together by the Artistic Director. Many ex-members attended on the night as part of the sold-out audience and the evening was a great success.

At this production, we remembered Jackie Kearns and Peter Wright, who brought so much to the company and who are greatly missed. The 'Jackie Kearns Creative Writing prize' was awarded for the first time, to the three writers who were chosen, and will become an annual award henceforth.

Kaleidoscope asked PC to further promote the legend of Prince Monolulu. Using research undertaken on Prince Monolulu's life for the play Once Upon A Market, stories were garnered from local people and woven into a performance of parts of his life and theirs via animated walks. These were very well attended and Kaleidoscope was delighted with the result.

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) Due to moving to a bigger rehearsal space, we were able to increase Company numbers and immediately include the new tranche of members into a performance within 8 weeks of joining.
- (2) Productions throughout the year have involved all Members of the Company, either in performance, backstage activities, writing and directing.
- (3) We continue to raise our voice in the community, not only at performances at Southwark Playhouse, but via our animated tours, which are always well-supported, and at community events.
- (4) Although Phase 2 of the Outreach programme did not gather the numbers we had hoped, those that attended found it fulfilling. As the funder dictated the attendance group, we have agreed with them that this aspect will be assessed for any future projects. Outreach will remain very much at the heart of our activities and we now have a core of skilled facilitators to call upon.
- (5) We continue to expand our involvement with local community groups, performing at their events, promoting their interests by use of the arts and by joining together as a consortium to fund and organise creative events within the borough of Southwark.

Operating Committee

The Operating Committee has seen some changes in personnel, but has bedded in with the remit of each OpCom member now established. The Trustees, with the Chair of the OpCom, will continue to look at the make-up of the Committee as the Company ventures into future developments and will continue to review and strengthen our governance.

Finance

Our finances are steady as, even in these difficult funding days, we continue to be supported by (mainly) local Southwark funders and in conjunction with other community groups. It is gratifying that for the past 2 years we have received part of box office receipts from Southwark Playhouse, an indication of the confidence shown in us by the Playhouse.

Other

Nine new members joined in late 2024 and went straight into the production for the 10th anniversary. We introduced a 3 month probationary period with this intake, to ensure that PC is a good fit on both sides.

Our Patron, Joe Fiennes, ran a Masterclass for the Company, based on an Act from As You Like It. We are very grateful for his support and the Company thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated the evening. Joe and John Whelan (Artistic Director) continue to discuss further promotional actions.

The Artistic Director has worked for many months pulling together a consortium of interested parties and funders for the 'Bermondsey & Rotherhithe In Song' Festival, in which PC will play a major part. Parties include musicians, property developers and social housing groups plus a group of funders ranging from HLF to local funders. This project will be run under the auspices of the Bermondsey Cherry Gardens Tenants & Residents Association and will be a community involvement project, requiring research undertaken by local people from archives and local museums, to winkle out the history via locally composed music and events from the late 19th Century. Together with music from the times, the Musical Director will compose lyrics and music for new songs, dance will be choreographed and a play written, to be performed in early 2026. People's Company will perform snippets of song and dance together with oral history on animated walking tours as part of the Festival, to market the idea and garner research interest from attendees.

There has been considerable involvement in preparing the three-year Company strategy over the past year. This is based on feedback from members and local interested parties, plus possible funding availability. The Artistic Director is compiling this document, bringing his vision and knowledge to the strategy, which should be available for Trustee review in the Summer of 2025 and hopefully in place by December 2025. Funding applications, based on the draft document, are already being considered, as we hope that, in line with our proposed (but not finalised) strategy, to seek longer-term funding, rather than project-to-project.

Trustees

The trustees continue in place and have taken considerable interest throughout the year in strengthening our governance via policies and procedures, plus several of them were able to bring their background in the arts to aid performances during the year.

(People's Company Trustees

Annual report to the Charity Commission 2024/2025)

People's Company Annual Accounts (24/25), year end 30 April 25		
b/f cash from year 23/24	6,414.60	
Assets (Cash)	6,414.60	
Assets, debts, liabilities, payroll, etc.	0.00	
Total Assets		6,414.60
Income		
Elephant & Castle Prop. Company (Inspiring Elephant) Monolulu Tours **	4,000.00	
Southwark Playhouse Box Office for OUAM	2,201.75	
Southwark Playhouse Box Office 10th anniversary	498.00	
Annual income total	6,699.75	6,699.75
Payments inward		
Kaleidoscope share of zoom	51.96	
FoPP share of zoom	51.96	
Total payments inward	103.92	103.92
Payments outward		
Kaleidoscope for Inspiring Elephant Monolulu Tour funding	4,000.00	
London Community Fund repayment of Outreach underspend	1,041.66	
	5,041.66	(5,041.66)
Outgoings		
Outreach Project, Phase 2		
Rehearsal space	120.00	
Project Management	450.00	
Facilitation of workshops and expenses	1,471.44	
Total Outreach	2,041.44	(2,041.44)
Once Upon a Market		
Complimentary Tickets	117.00	
Total OUAM	117.00	(117.00)
10th Anniversary		
Rehearsal space	280.00	
Programmes	32.70	
Props & costume	139.86	
Equipment, transport, travel expenses	326.53	
Graphics	600.00	
Complimentary refreshments	600.00	
Present for Director	11.27	
Total 10th Anniversary	1,990.36	(1,990.36)
Admin/General		
Annual insurance	230.31	
zoom	155.88	
Website	129.60	
Google storage	79.99	
Social media/website	27.00	
Trustee expenses	42.20	
Admin supplies	31.20	
Transport	9.93	
Annual writing trophies	38.97	
Total Admin	745.08	(745.08)

	Summary Outgoings		
	Kaleidoscope	(4,000.00)	
	London Community Fund repayment	(1,041.66)	
	Outreach	(2,041.44)	
	Once Upon a Market	(117.00)	
	10th Anniversary	(1,990.36)	
	Admin/General	(745.08)	
	Total outgoings YTD	(9,935.54)	(9,935.54)
	Summary all income		
	Annual income	6,699.75	
	Payments inward	103.92	
	Total outgoings	(9,935.54)	
	b/f cash from previous year	6,414.60	
	Cash on hand	3,282.66	
	Restricted funding	0.00	
	Unrestricted cash on hand	3,282.66	
	NB: **Inspiring Elephant funding for Monolulu tours taken by PC on behalf of Kaleidoscope, as a charity was required.		
	For approval at AGM on 1 July 2025		
	Appointed Trustee (Susan Hayes)	<i>S. Hayes</i>	
	Treasurer (Shelagh Farren)	<i>Shelagh Farren</i>	