BEEE Creative
Dance Re:Ignite 4.0
Creative
Documentation



BEEE CREATIVE
Dance connections in Herts & Beds

Hello,

What's held here was gathered gently through chats, movement, photography, observation, and care.

I was present: listening, photographing, sometimes dancing too, always looking for what shifted, opened, and resonated. This presentation only presents some examples of Dance Re:Ignite 4.0 events and does not represent everything that was delivered as part of the project. It's aim is to reflect some of what unfolded across the six Hertfordshire co-created spaces.

Take it at your own pace and I hope the pages bring something to reflect on and enjoy.

-Cheniece Warner, External Project Documenter

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01

Introduction

What is Dance Re:Ignite 4.0? Take a brief look at the previous project and look at the locations that took part this year!

Dance Re:Ignite 4.0

What is Dance Re:Ignite 4.0?

Dance Re:Ignite 4.0 was a two-year programme bringing dance to older adults (65+) and disabled adults across Hertfordshire. Delivered in six towns, it connected local and national artists, volunteers, and cross-sector partners to create accessible, high-quality dance opportunities. Building on previous projects, it aimed to grow local dance infrastructure, support artists, and establish lasting partnerships to embed dance into community life.

Dance Re:Ignite 4.0 took place across six Hertfordshire towns and their surrounding areas:

- Royston
- Bishop's Stortford
- St Albans
- Hemel Hempstead
- Watford
- South Oxhey

from social clubs and community halls to arts centres and festival stages.

BEEE Creative

Is small arts charity working across Hertfordshire & Bedfordshire that promotes the message of accessibility and enjoyment for dance alongside supporting connectedness for artists, practitioners cross-sector partners and communities. Their aim to make dance accessible to everyone, at any stage of life, by removing barriers and co-creating high-quality, ambitious work with communities, artists, and partners.

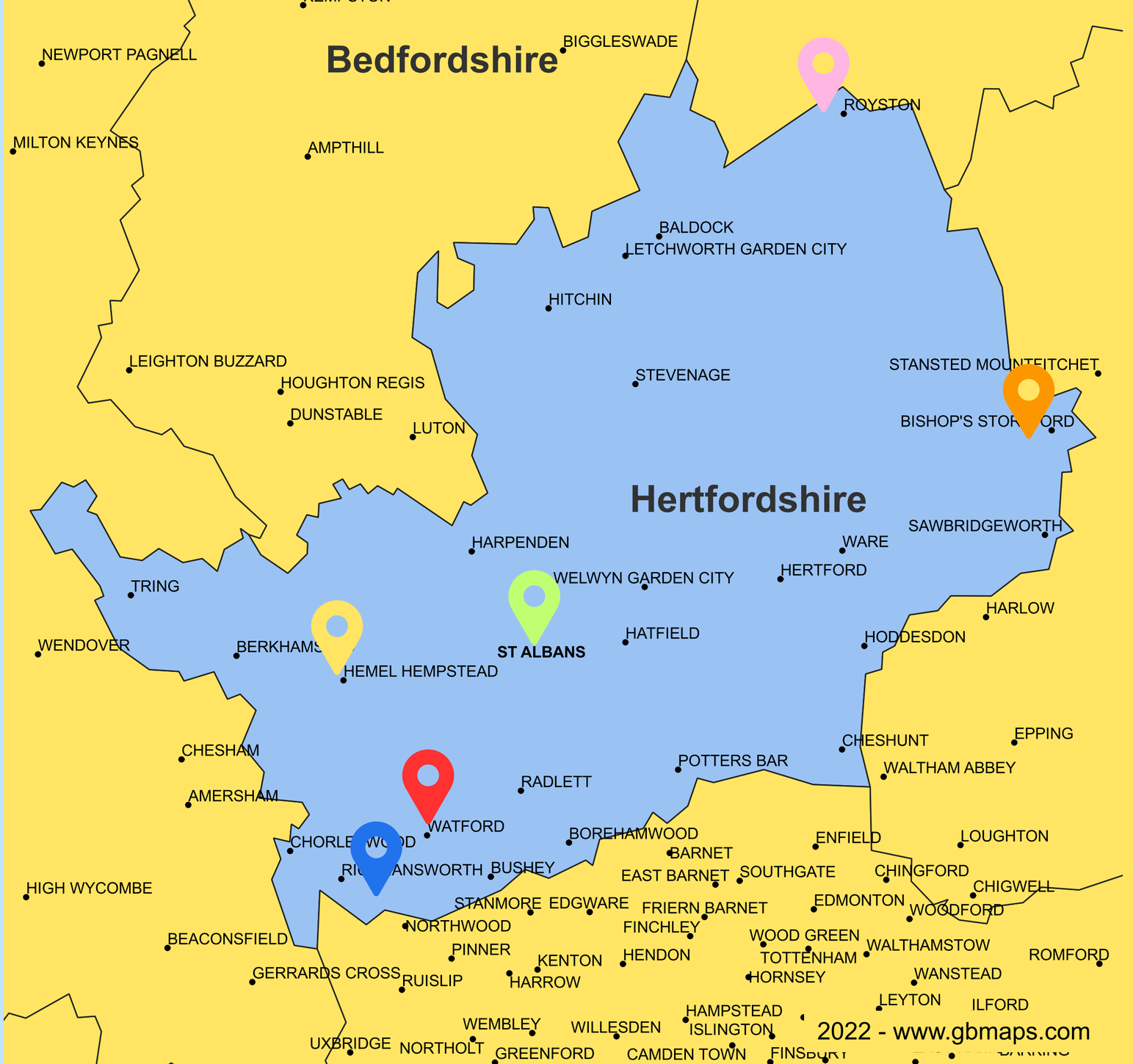
Each location offered a unique take on the project's overarching theme of transformation. There was a rich mix of dance, visual arts, music and storytelling, brought by thoughtful artists and collaborators. Sessions invited participants to move, make, and share – creating spaces where stories, laughter and connection could grow.

Acknowledgement of Dance Re:Ignite 3.0

Building on Kirsten Hutton's evaluation of Dance Re:Ignite 3.0 – which found that a hyper-local approach successfully strengthened community dance infrastructure, deepened connections between artists and participants, and supported local artists to expand their practice through cross-artform collaboration – Dance Re:Ignite 4.0 has continued to refine and define its co-creation model. This iteration further addressed barriers to engagement, reaching those 'not yet' engaged, and built on cross-sector partnerships to enhance access and sustainability. At its heart, the project maintained a strong focus on participant wellbeing, creativity, and agency – ensuring that the experience of taking part remained central, while fostering a sense of ownership, connection, and value in the communities involved.

Dance Re:Ignite 4.0 Locations

- Royston
- Bishop's Stortford
- St Albans
- Hemel Hampstead
- Watford
- South Oxhey



02

All around Herfordshire

A thoughtful look at the six locations and accompanying events I attended between September 2024 and July 2025. Throughout, you will find collages sharing what went on, my creative responses and feedback from volunteer dancers, and audience participants!



South Oxhey

Three Rivers Group

What Am I Like?

Lead Artist and collaborator(s): Rebecca Benford, in collaboration with Full of Life Dance, worked with the Getting Together Club – a local group of older adults who meet regularly.

The social club members were invited to watch and engage with their performance piece ‘What Am I Like?’.

‘What Am I Like?’ is a performance that invites audiences to peel back the layers of who we are – in different situations, through time, and the superhero inside us all. Using costumes, everyday objects, projection, and layered sound, the piece wove together the dance volunteers' personal stories. Projected images and text danced across the walls and their bodies, deepening the messages of the work. The artwork was also created in collaboration with visual artist Maxine Ellis.



















Next came the workshop where the audience participants were invited to explore their own identities – how we become more than one thing over a lifetime. As we grow, we take on familiar roles: sibling, parent, colleague. But this session was about rediscovering stories or facts that others in the group might not know about you.

Into small groups, volunteer dancers helped them reminisce through sharing prompts and get-to-know-you questions. This then created a long sequence of movements they learnt from one another that retold their stories all together each of the stories

One audeince participant shared they'd met the Queen. Another was a grandmother of nine. Another recollected how they played fiddle as a child too, and one had spent many years as a vet and helped a cow give birth. Stories no one else in the room had heard before, despite their regulars meets!



What's been truly amazing about the BEEE Creative session is how they've sparked new stories from our regulars. Just when you feel you've heard it all, this workshop really brought so many more stories!

comment from a group activity coordinator


St Albans group

Aquadance

Lead artists and collaborators: Dawn Hudson (dance) with Dance Now, a group of disabled adults based at Trestle Arts Base and Kathryn Holt (visual art)

The session took place in a black box theatre space with tiered fold away seating- a familiar creative home for the Dance Now group. Created through regular sessions, ‘Aquadance’ was a performance brimming with play and wonder, developed through a co-creative process between dance artist Dawn Hudson, visual artist Kathryn Holt, and the participants themselves.

‘Aquadance’ dove into the world of sea creatures - from drifting jellyfish to shimmering schools of fish, suspended and wired together, moving as one. Seaweed, clams, and even a shark made an appearance. Props made from textured paper were used interactively, inviting movement and connection. The space was really transformed the space into a joyful, free environment under the sea!















After their performance, we gathered together for a chat about the project and how they arrived to the Aquadance.

They shared that they ‘started with lots of different mediums and it sort of evolved from there.’

After being given the theme of transformation from BEEE Creative, Dawn worked with visual artist Kathryn, who works with reused and recycled materials to create their work, to bring lots of different mediums for the group to play with.

- Like an enormous ball of wool: turning into ghosts, using them as skipping ropes and wrapping each other up.
- Rolls of paper: unrolling, moving under and over the paper, folding, shaping. This felt like they were on a travelling on a journey
- Constantina Folders: opening, shutting, they looked like sea anemones!

The group really enjoyed the experimenting and found glimpses of sea life among it all, especially enjoying the folding, cutting and shaping of the paper to be tranformed into something new!


Tales of the deep blue,
Trestle's sea explorers play
Splashing through seaweed,
Jellyfish bob along the way.
A school of fish swims by,
Waves shimmer, clams all snap—
We're explorers of the ocean,
Discovering with every lap!


Watford Group

Home to Here

Lead artist and collaborators: Laura Horn and, New Connections group with visual artist Anji Archer in Watford Greenbank Care Home.

When the group visited Greenbanks Care Home, the atmosphere was warm and open – smiles greeting the dancers, chairs gathered close. The room was transformed into a place of joy, play and familiarity.

‘Home to Here’ explored where we call home – what makes it special, and the feeling of taking root. Suitcases became vessels for memories, each holding what was most cherished about home. Stories were told through movement – from where people had come from, to why they wanted to be here today – before coming together to celebrate and ‘take roots’ as a group.









Colours, music, and tasks brought the space alive. Residents chose their favourite songs, many with a nostalgic pull, setting the tone for playful movement. From a magical suitcase, iridescent streamers were unravelled and swayed through the air, catching the light.

Activities built coordination and connection: wafting ribbons, passing colourful mesh handkerchiefs, and gathering around a parachute. Some residents preferred to watch, smiling at the activity around them, while others jumped right in – laughing, singing, and playing.

Volunteer dancers paired up with residents throughout, ensuring everyone was included. The room carried a celebratory energy; shimmering, warm, and full of shared moments.

🎵 Songbird - Kenny G










DANCE
RE-IGNITE





Having these sessions have become something to look forward to! Its so nice the way they adapt to each person's mood and ability means no one is left out. Getting them involved in the music choices through out the session each resident has a moment to listen and share their favourite song.

comment from a carer



Royston

North Herts Group

Stories of Change

Lead artist and collaborators: Carrie Washington, BEEE Creative's Adult Dance Class Royston, visual artist Jane Glynn.

Set in a homey space filled with soft chatter, the group gathered gently, ready for the session to begin. The focus of the session was being in the now, and the building of the relationship between the artists and residents.

'Stories of Change' co-created through these sessions starts from stories of the dancers' individual experiences of change, then explore the rhythms of change. Taking the audience from a place of calm, change may creep, jolt or be a choice in our lives, but takes us to places unknown and uncertainty, before new adjustments begin and settle once more.









Seated together in a circle of comfortable chairs, the group began with warm-up games – throwing and catching glitter-filled inflatable balls in pinks and blues, overarm, underarm, rolling along the floor. Imagination took centre stage in a game with a simple plastic stick – whisking a cake, casting a spell, swaying as a branch in the wind, or popping bubbles. When strung together, each movement became part of a playful group story.

The group, already familiar and supportive of one another, exchanged jokes and encouragement. Music lifted the energy even higher, sparking sing-alongs and smiles. Volunteer dancers encouraged and supported residents in expressing their ideas, ensuring each person felt seen and valued.



Those who are usually reserved have started to come out of their shells- laughing, sharing, even performing little bits with pride. It's been incredibly moving to see.

Comment from group activity coordinator

🎵 September - Earth, Wind & Fire

Hemel Hempstead & Bishop Stortford groups

Although I was not present for these sessions, I wanted to acknowledge their place within the wider project. Here you will find a glimpse of their works and their films, all of which convey the overall connectedness and creativity of Dance Re:Ignite 4.0.



Small Joys

Hemel Hampstead, Dacorum

Lead Artists & Collaborator(s): Louise White and Annie Smith with the Dacorum group, alongside visual artists Katharine Harper and Kerry Lanigan.

‘Small Joys’, set in their imaginary café, celebrate the little things in life that bring us joy, the moments each day that make us smile.

"Enjoy the little things in life...for one day you'll look back and realise they were the big things"
- Kurt Vonnegut.





At the Heather Club, facilitator Louise White has reached icon status – no last name needed!

Her sessions brim with joy and energy, drawing everyone in and up on their feet, dancing and smiling. Louise has become part of the club's heartbeat.





Stortford Scenes

Lead Artists & Collaborator(s): Adriana Welham (Vida Wellness) and painter Gabrielle Vickery with the East Herts group.

‘Stortford Scenes’ blended dance and painting to reflect Bishop’s Stortford’s changing face – from local landmarks to the natural spaces that shape its identity.









Thank you so much to you and your team for visiting us. A participant just told me how much she and the residents enjoyed your visit. ... It would be lovely to keep in touch with BEEE Creative!

A message shared from Bishop Strotford Group coordinator

Dance Re:Ignite Festival 4.0

November 2024



Dance Re:Ignite 4.0 Festival

On 6 November 2024, Dance Re:Ignite 4.0 brought together over 140 people to celebrate dance by and for older adults and inclusive groups. The day took place across a bright, multipurpose space and theatre stage at the Eric Morecambe Centre – filled with energy, joy, and movement.

Workshops ran throughout the day, offering everyone – from first-timers to seasoned movers – the chance to try new styles, connect with others, and perform in two shared performance platforms.









Twenty dance and arts practitioners facilitated the day, and it wasn't just about performance – it was about presence and connection! Participants spoke about pushing through personal boundaries, building friendships that stretch beyond class, and how dance becomes something to look forward to in the week – a spark of possibility.



Images: Simon Richards





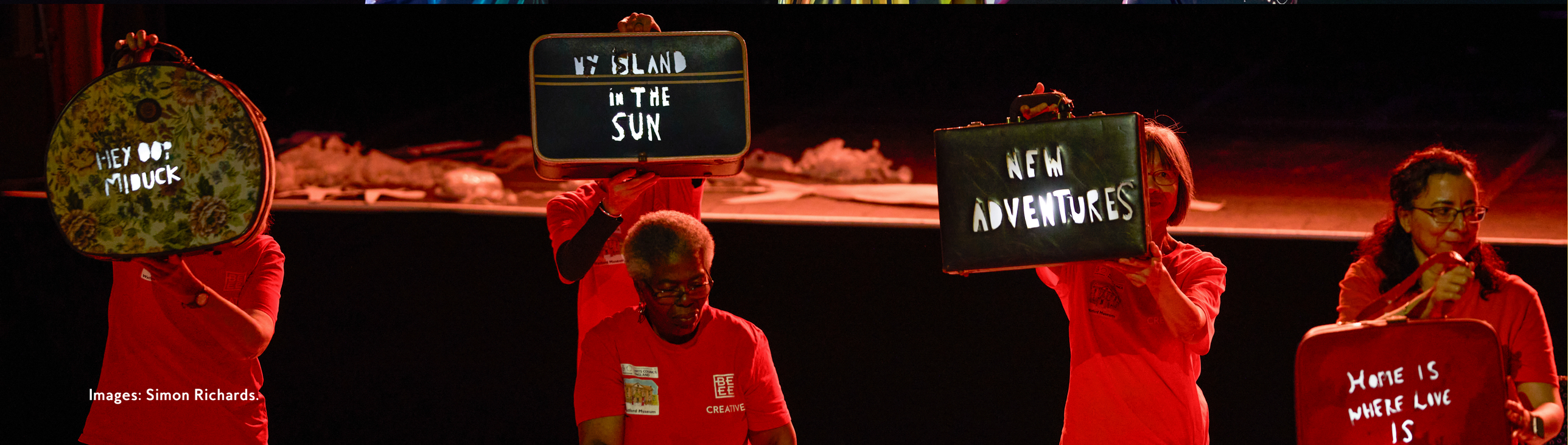
Images: Simon Richards.





Images: Simon Richards.





Images: Simon Richards.



Images: Simon Richards.





Images: Simon Richards.





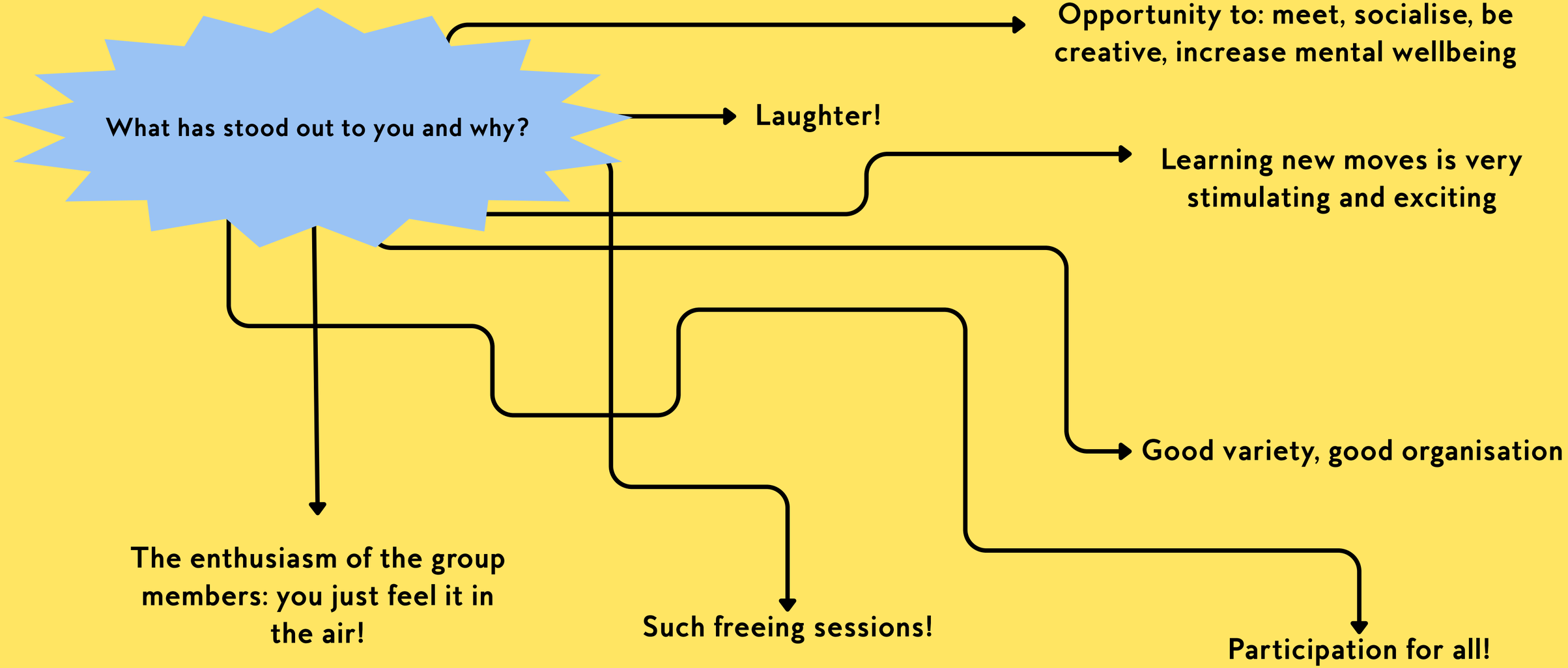
Images: Simon Richards.



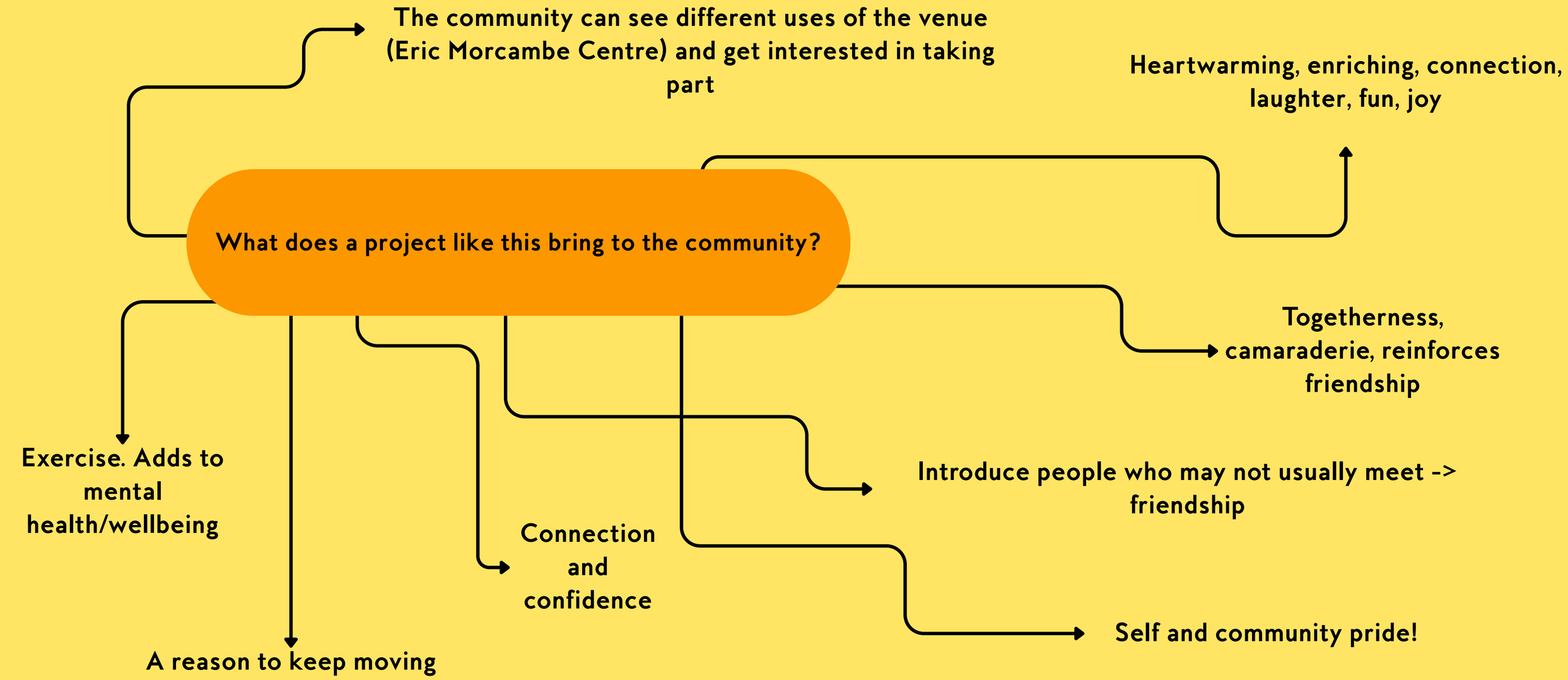


Images: Simon Richards.

Festival Feedback



Festival Feedback cont.



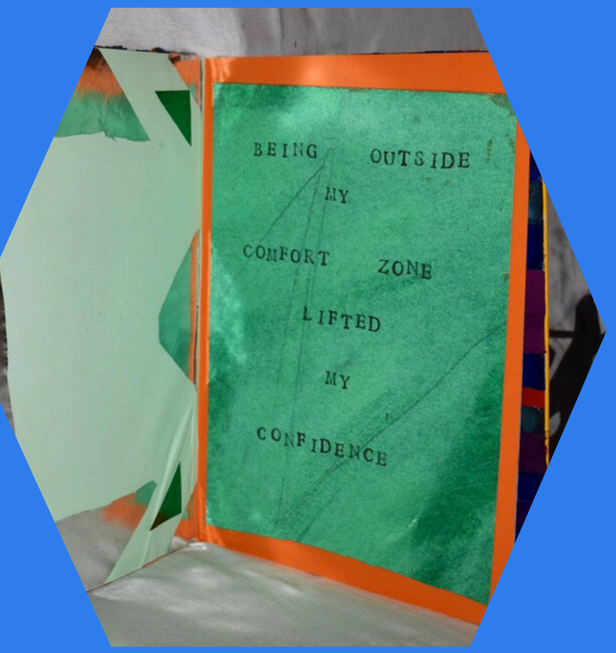


Co-creation Symposium

Images: Simon Richards.

On 9 December 2024, BEEEE Creative held a Creative Symposium a Trestle Arts Base, St Albans. Three dance organisations sharing their approaches to working with older adults and inclusive groups. Sian Stevenson (Moving Memory Dance Theatre) spoke about challenging ageism and celebrating older performers, while Carrie Washington (BEEE Creative) and Jo Frater (Confidance) discussed embedding co-creation in their programmes. Across the panel, key themes emerged – the value of long-term engagement, high-quality programming, and safe, welcoming spaces.

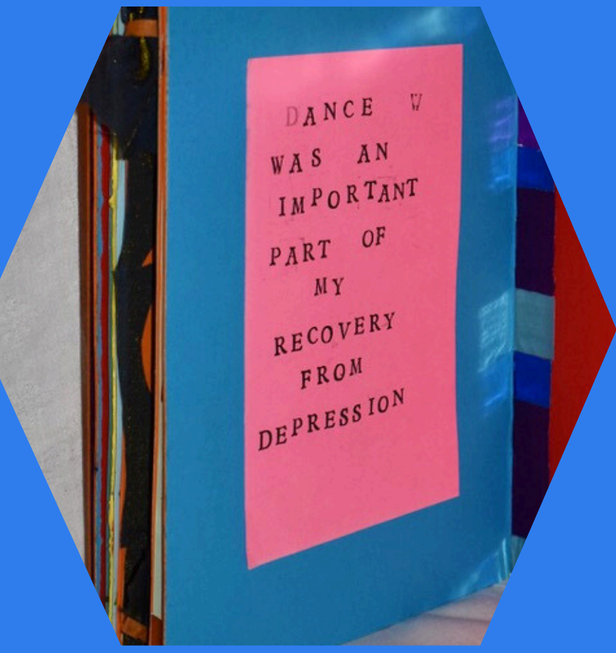


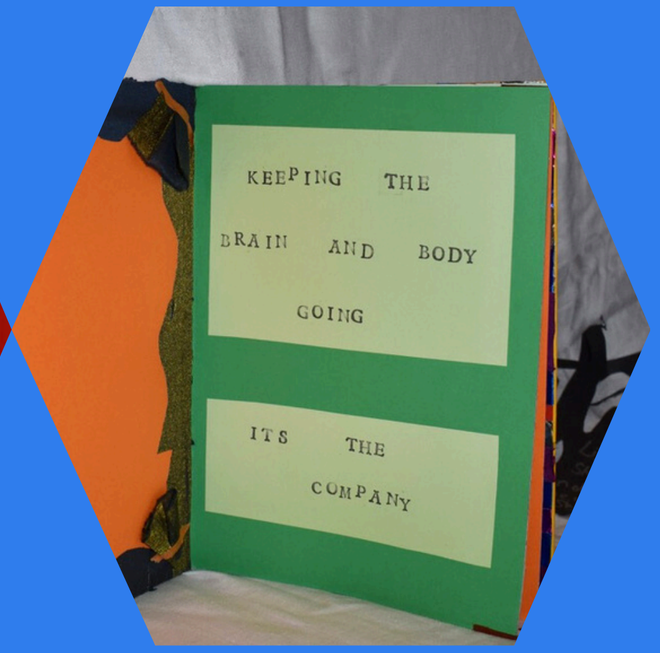


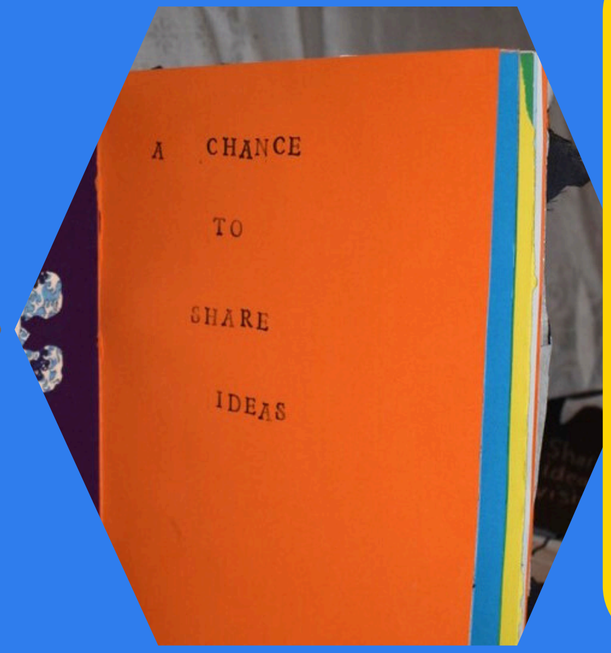












Co-creation in dance blends personal expression with collective achievement. It invites participants to share ideas, connect, and build something meaningful together. In doing so, it nurtures well-being, boosts confidence, and creates a shared sense of purpose.
It crosses boundaries – encouraging people to step beyond what's familiar, to be seen, heard, and part of something larger than themselves.

In the second half, the room came together to imagine how co-creation could be strengthened.

Conversations centred on sustainable practices, the need for proper funding and evaluation, and the power of building connections across organisations.

TRUST + RESPECT

Sharing ideas + ownership

Cooperation a, listening and getting together

POOLING ideas

IT'S AN INVITATION

Non-hierarchal

Take time to reflect and evaluate

LISTEN TO YOUR GUT

Just play!

It will never be perfect- it may go in a completely different direction- thats okay!

it's about creating a special place of possibilites

Prosperity
Progressing
Nature (Healthy Planet)

Positive attitude

TRUST +

UNDERSTANDING

IMAGINATION

CO-OPERATION

Open mindedness

Safety

Inclusion




Golden Slumbers

Presented as part of the Watford Fringe by Moving Memory Dance Theatre and a local community cast, in partnership with BEEE Creative.

Building on the Welsh concept of Cwtch – a loving hold – Golden Slumbers was a highly visual and physical outdoor show exploring the endless cycle of labour experienced by women through their lives, and celebrating everyone's right to rest and recuperation.

Moving Memory is a ground-breaking dance-theatre company that puts the older body centre stage. For over a decade, they've been making striking visual performances for public spaces, festivals, and theatres, while supporting older people to have greater access to creative opportunities and challenging preconceptions of ageing.






FINISHER


SOLICITORS




SLUG & LETTUCE





The crowd that gathered was curious and intrigued – a mix of family, friends, BEEE Creative and Moving Memory supporters, and entirely new faces, with ages spanning across generations. Moments in the performance drew looks of awe, knowing smiles, and nods of recognition – from women feeling seen in the portrayal of overlooked actions, to parents relating to the tender and chaotic realities of caregiving. Quiet comments, gentle laughter, and shared glances passed between audience members, as if they were swapping their own untold stories while watching.

03

Collage + My Reflection




Fire
exit
CREATIVE










Londis
6am-8pm




Fire exit
Push B










Maffey & Brentnall
SOLICITORS












DANCE
RE:IGNITE
Fire exit
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND
Watford Museum



Co-creation flourished when agency was placed in the hands of audience – when they could shape and share what mattered to them. BEEE Creative and the volunteer dancers met each group where they were, responding to energy, pace and ability. Frameworks stayed adaptable and bespoke, with the journey together valued above the final product.

BEEE Creative's strength lies in deep listening, coupled with the capacity to respond and encourage. This approach empowered people as individuals, while holding the collective experience with care.





Collaborators, volunteers and participants met one another in genuine exchange - building trust and opening space for creativity to thrive.

In these spaces, people stepped into themselves or reintroduced themselves to the group and felt the power of being seen. The energy was tangible: faces lit up, stories swirled through the air, and conversation and movement unfolded with ease.

This project united Hertfordshire through dance – weaving connections across towns, communities and generations.

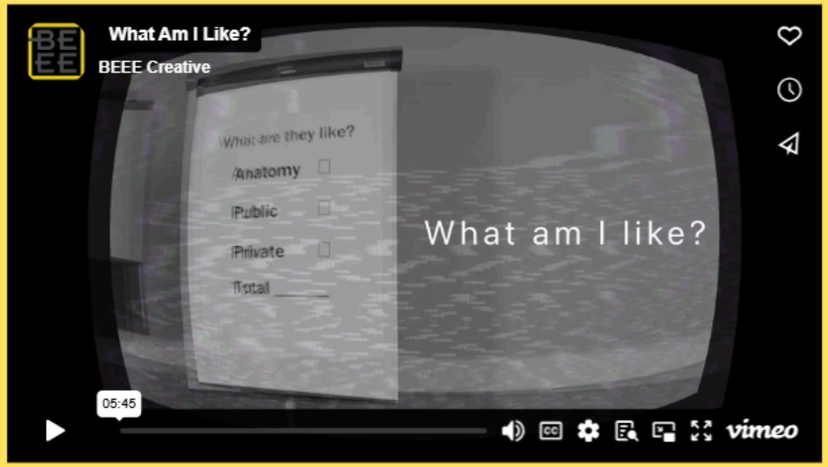
04

Credits + Films

All Films by Tom Hobden

Title: What Am I Like?
Creators: Rebecca Benford, Maxine Ellis and dancers - Bev, Carole, Doreen, Janet, Janet, Jill, Sandra, Sonia, Sue
Music: What Am I Like, Stuart Neale

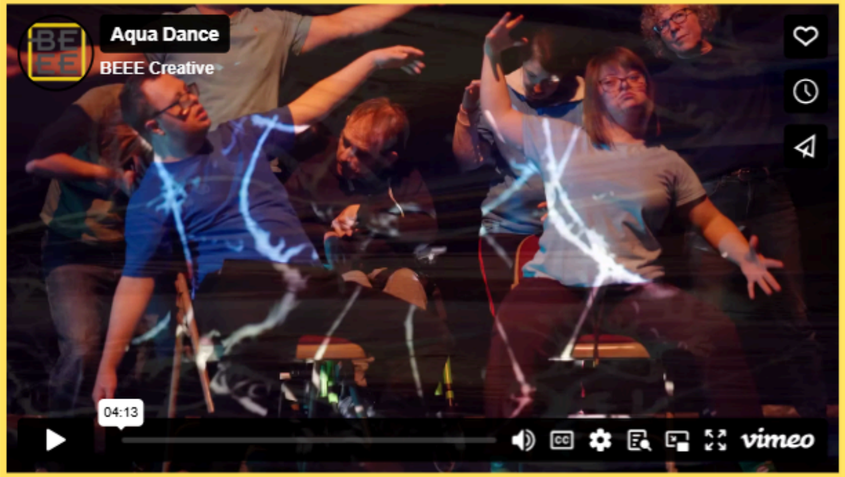
[Watch here]



Title: Aquadance
Creators: Dawn Hudson, Kathryn Holt, Hattie and Trestle Arts Base Dance Now dancers: Anna Hilliard, Peter Errington, Rory Hunt, Katie Shepherd, Stephen Kelly, Hamish Finn Ireland, Mary Craig, Gary Walton, Hatty Hardy, Dawn Hudson

Music: Alexander Eales

[Watch here]



Title: Home to Here
Creators: Laura Horn, Anji Archer and dancers - Ah-Fong, Annette, Claire, Jan, Janet, Laura, Marina, Meng Keow, Peter, Phyllis, Rengiz, Sheila, Wendy
Music: From Home To Here - Malackey Henderson

[Watch here]



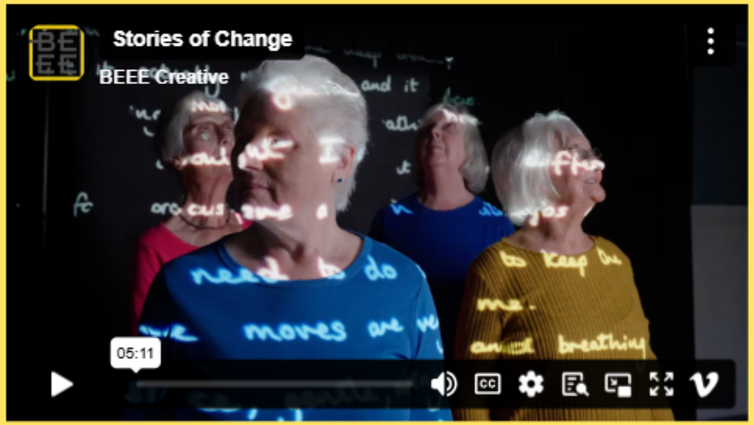
Title: Dance Re:Ignite 4.0 Festival Highlights
Featuring...
Film by: Simon Richardson

[Watch here]



Title: Stories of Change
Creators: Carrie Washington, Jane Glynn, Katie Williamson and dancers - Anne, Sally, Sarah, Shirley, Sylvie, Marie
Music: Stories of Change, Jenni Pinnock
Music: From Home To Here - Malackey Henderson

Watch here



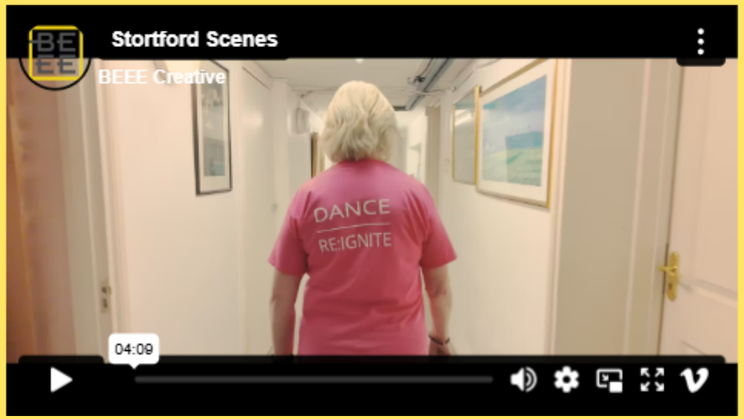
Title: Small Joys
Creators: Louise White, Annie Smith, Lo White, Katharine Harper and dancers - Audrey, Jane, Joan, Trish, Pearl, Rosemary and Brenda
Music: Small Joys, Jonathan 'Stan' White

Watch here



Title: Stortford Scenes
Creators: Adriana Welham, Gabrielle Vickery and dancers - Kathy, Jane, Robert, Steve.
Music: Peter Lemer
Filmmaker: Tom Hobden

Watch here



CREATIVE

Curated and photographed by Cheniece Warner, with additional photography by Simon Richardson. Text combines participant comments with Cheniece's observations.

BEEE CREATIVE
Dance connections in Herts & Beds



Thank you to Carrie Washington, the wonderful participants and lovely lead artists and collaborators of BEEE Creative's Dance Re:Ignite 4.0, for welcoming me into the space to observe, capture and creatively document the sessions.

– Cheniece Warner
External Project Documenter