CREATIVE

TEN YEARS *OF* IMPACT





Fluid Time collaboration with Jane Glynn and Elizabeth Murton. *Photographer - Tia Washington, 2022*

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BEEE Creative is a charity that believes everyone has the opportunity to dance; to learn, belong and enjoy.

We connect underrepresented communities and individuals to inclusive, high-quality dance experiences that foster creativity, wellbeing, and belonging.

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES



COMMUNITY DANCE INFRASTRUCTURE



CROSS SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS



Through co-creation, partnership collaboration, and artist development, we build local dance infrastructure and empower people to express themselves, feel valued, and engage meaningfully with their communities.

FOREWORD

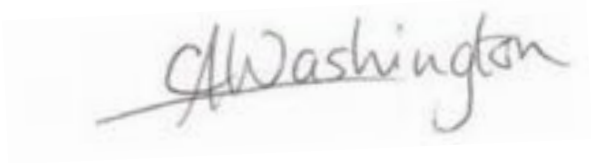
Over the last ten years I have been proud to see BEEE Creative grow from a primarily freelance artistic and consultancy practice into a well-established charity with a strong reputation for producing high-quality dance and interdisciplinary work with genuine social impact.

From the beginning, our work responded to a clear need. That is, greater access to meaningful creative opportunities, stronger connections between communities and better support for dance artists, organisations and partners across Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Luton. While our projects are rooted in community dance practice, our role has grown far beyond delivery alone. Today BEEE Creative is recognised as a trusted source of dance knowledge, expertise and advocacy within the county and beyond.

We are proud that this work has received regional and national recognition, with some aspects of our work also reaching international audiences. However, the real measure of impact lies in the relationships built over time and in the lives enriched through connection, creativity and participation.

This impact study reflects not only what has been achieved over the past decade, but also what is possible when organisations invest consistently in communities, artists and long-term collaboration. As we look ahead, BEEE Creative remains committed to championing dance as a powerful tool for connection, wellbeing and change, continuing to build partnerships and opportunities that support both people and place for years to come.

Carrie Washington



Director, BEEE Creative CIO



“You always know that a project and performance from BEEE Creative will be full of care, integrity and empowered performers. There have been many memorable moments - in performances and from hearing people who have taken part talking about the work afterwards - and these all come from the passion of the central team which brings everyone with them.

BEEE Creative is an organisation that is ambitious for its new and returning participants, is adept at finding new opportunities and agile in responding to the challenges around them.

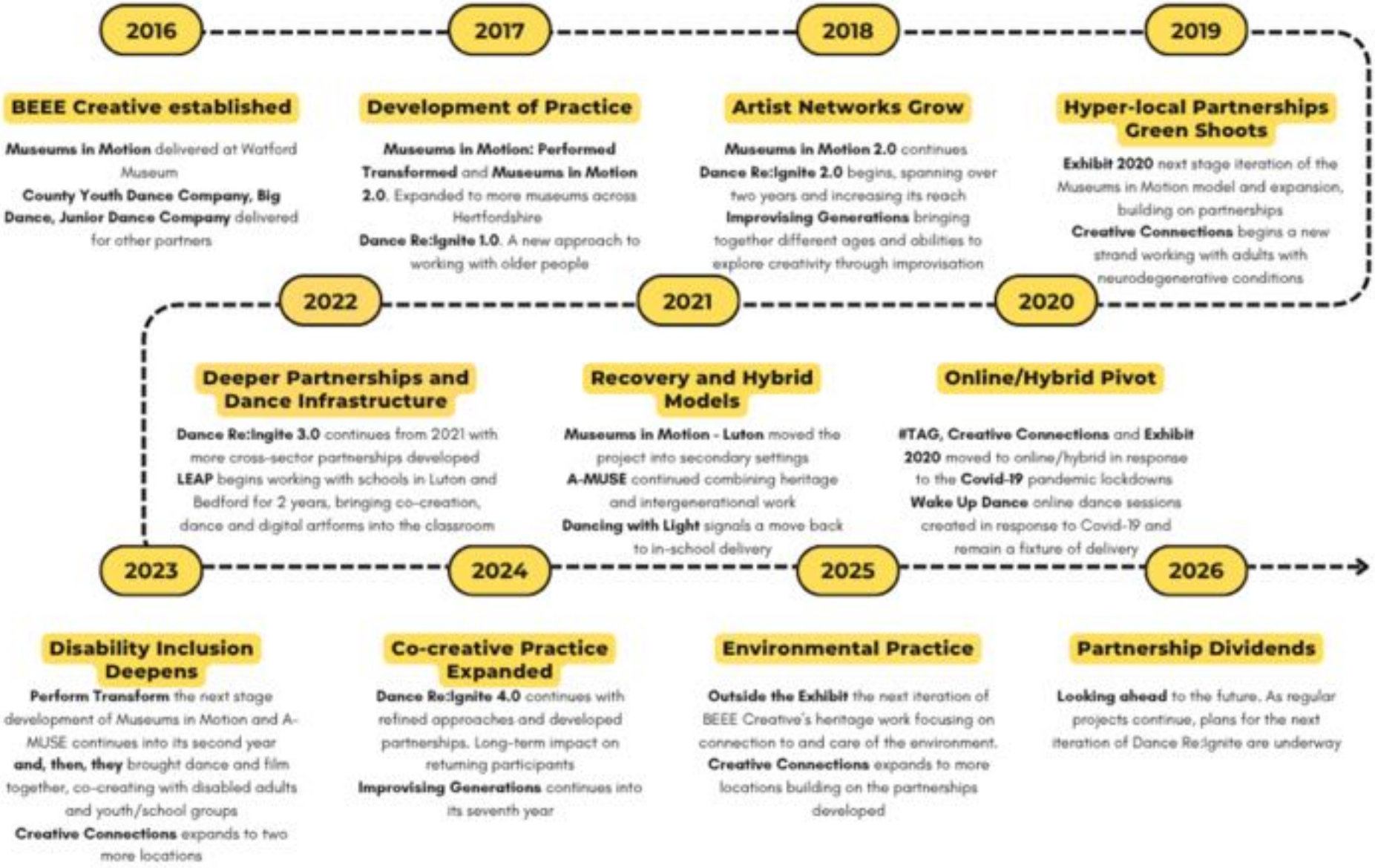
I am proud to look back on projects with Carrie and her extraordinary team of collaborators across these 10 years, in different parts of Hertfordshire, with different topics, participants, partners and outcomes.

They are also very generous partners, championing speculative collaborations like the Herts 2020 Year of Culture from the start with generosity and a “what could go right” attitude.

I am confident and excited to see what may come in the next ten years.”

NICK DENHAM
Creative Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire Music Service and the Herts 2020 Year of Culture.

TIMELINE OF KEY PROJECTS AND MILESTONES



Dance Re:Ignite Dacorum Group (Dacorum Community Dance at Dance Re:Ignite Festival. Photographer - Simon Richardson, 2024



FROM MODEST BEGINNINGS...

We began with Museums in Motion, a dance and heritage project with young carers in Hertfordshire, since then we have steadily built our work across three project strands.

DANCE AND HERITAGE

Starting with Museums in Motion for young people, this has now become an intergenerational offer with museums across Hertfordshire, with heritage and dance still at its centre.

DANCE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Dance Re:Ignite was developed to offer older people an opportunity engage in creative dance. It too now has reach across Hertfordshire, developing the skills of local artists and the participants it works with.

CONNECTION THROUGH DANCE

Creative Connections, Improvising Generations and Wake Up and Dance, each offer regular opportunities for people to connect through dance.

TO A SUSTAINED REACH...

48 Total Projects, each increasing in scale and depth. Over time projects have grown from being a short term intervention to 2-3 year in-depth programmes

6272 Average number of Participants each year

14,879 Highest number of Participants in one year, from 1,265 in 2017/18

4,944 Total Participant sessions

6,666 Average number of Live Audiences per year

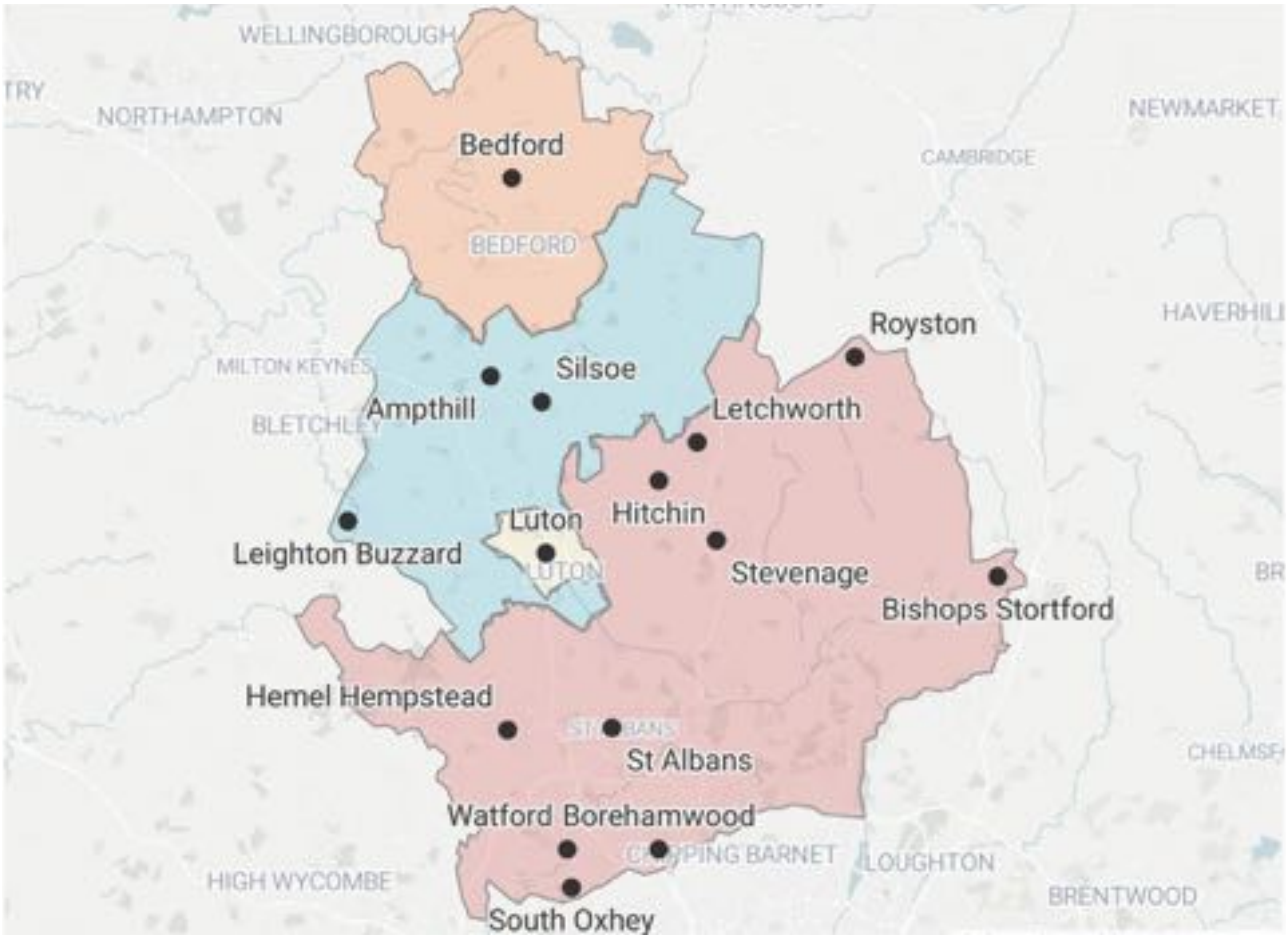
49 Average number of artists per year

52 Average number of volunteers per year

57 Average number of partners per year

93 Films produced

THE MAP SHOWS THE AREAS IN WHICH BEEE CREATIVE WORKS AND SOME OF TOWNS WHERE CORE ACTIVITY HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED.



THE CHANGE WE MAKE

We make a difference in three key areas

WELLBEING

We know that people feel better, mentally and physically when they take part with us.



SKILLS AND LEARNING

We foster ongoing skills development for both our participants and our artists.



DANCE PRACTICE

Artists and participants are better able to lead, collaborate and create with confidence.



WELLBEING

We use creative interventions that aim to support participants in exploring and developing their own creativity and sees this as a contributor to wellbeing. Throughout our projects the themes of belonging, feeling valued and seen, connection, and physical wellbeing regularly appear.

92%
of participants across our Dance Re:Ignite projects felt like they were part of something when taking part.

BELONGING

Participants consistently describe BEEE Creative projects as safe and welcoming, as places to connect socially. Having shared creative goals, and continuity of contact with artists contributed to participants feeling of belonging.

Improvising Generations and Creative Connections participants described feeling like they had a sense of family and belonging was especially noted in the Dance Re:Ignite and the Museums in Motion projects, where sharing stories and co-creation deepened the group bonds.

> *Participants described the group, project and the wider organisation of BEEE Creative as a 'family', 'dance company' and even a 'shelter' for them to come and be themselves."*
> ***ImprovisingGenerations***

Artists also experienced an increased sense of belonging through peer-to-peer learning and shared reflective practice within artist networks.

> *Artists felt better connected, better supported and being able to broaden their own teaching."*
> ***Dance Re:Ignite 2.0***

Partners – schools, museums and care settings – noticed this sense of belonging too, noting that participants felt more able to return or re-engage with their cultural setting, after taking part.

92%
of participants from across *Dance Re:Ignite*, *Museums in Motion* and *Perform felt like their ideas had been listened to*

FEELING VALUED AND SEEN

The co-creative approach we take means our participants make genuine creative contributions in making our work. This has meant participants have felt recognised as contributors, especially when their movement ideas, stories or "signature moves" become part of the shared work. We have seen this particularly in the Improvising Generations and Dance Re:Ignite projects, working with older adults and adults with learning disabilities, who have felt less visible in other settings.

> *I've felt throughout the process that we were dancers first and elderly second. There was so much room for what we can do rather than what we can't do."*
> ***Participant, Dance Re:Ignite 3.0***

Teachers and carers have consistently reported seeing aspects of individuals emerge in the dance space that they *"hadn't seen before"* showing increased confidence and self-expression. Children who shared or saw their work exhibited felt a sense of pride and accomplishment. Artists too felt valued both by their groups and by their peers when their expertise was sought to adapt content,support co-creation or troubleshoot technology.

Our holistic approach to participants and artists extends to our interns, who feel valued working with us. One intern has since gone on to have a successful career in community dance and has returned as a Board member.

> *This experience not only gave her confidence to consider that she could be on a board, but also that her voice would be valued."*
> ***Exhibit 2020***

PHYSICAL WELLBEING

…dancing helped them to feel less fatigued during the day and sleep better at night."
Improvising Generations report

86%
was the average percentage of participants across projects who feel 'active and vigorous' after taking part

Participants consistently reported improvements to their physical wellbeing, especially in the *Dance Re:Ignite, Creative Connections* and *Improvising Generations projects.* Participants described feeling more energised and physically active.

> *One participant's metaphor likened the experience of dancing to inserting batteries in a torch; dance lights them up and energises them."*
> ***Creative Connections***

> They gained confidence in physical movement, with some associating reductions in stiffness and joint pain to the dance activities they were doing. They felt physical movement reduced anxiety and improved their mood. "It was good for my soul… to move the whole of my body in a group, both under instruction and following my own volition, after such a long time, felt very healing and healthful." Improvising Generations Young people too reported feeling more active and more motivated.

> *To get her out of bed in the morning you have to turn on the hose. With this project, she was a like a greyhound out of the trap."*
> ***Museums in Motion***



Improvising Generations - dance and outdoors workshop with Laura Horn and Michelle Gersh (Green Connections), *Photographer - Cheniece Warner, 2022*

RESILIENCE, AGENCY, AND IDENTITY

Across our projects, participants have developed stronger self-esteem, a clearer sense of identity, and increased feelings of agency through co-created dance and creative exploration. Young people and adults repeatedly described gaining confidence by realising that their ideas mattered; in *Museums in Motion 2.0*, for example, *"all felt their ideas were heard,"* and many reported a stronger sense of achievement and belonging as a result.

In *Improvising Generations*, participants spoke about discovering new aspects of themselves through movement, with one person expressing that dance helped them realise, *"I am a dancer… it transforms the way you act."*

People also developed a sense of agency to take creative risks, shape artistic decisions, and lead elements of sessions. Evaluations have noted significant increases in confidence contributing ideas and co-creating with others.

Our heritage-based projects have consistently seen young people shift their perceptions of museums from places they expected to be *"boring"* or *"not for me"* to places they described as fun, friendly, safe, and interesting.

INCREASED CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

Our heritage-based projects have consistently seen young people shift their perceptions of museums from places they expected to be "boring" or "not for me" to places they described as fun, friendly, safe, and interesting. Their negative associations decreased. As participants felt ownership of what they created in these spaces in the Museums in Motion projects, their confidence to engage with museums independently also grew. The evaluations show that over two thirds of young people wanted to visit more museums after taking part, and many returned voluntarily for launch events, often bringing friends and family with them.

Projects like Exhibit 2020 and Perform Transform enabled young people to see museums as places where their ideas mattered and where they could be creative.

This co-creative relationship with heritage increased their likelihood of visiting cultural spaces in the future and strengthened long-term cultural engagement.

75%
participants, on average across our programmes, felt more connected to others after taking part

CONNECTION

We know our work fosters connections, with dance consistently providing the foundation to build relationships between peers, carers, teachers, and artists. Not just to each other, but to communities and heritage, which has led to participants forming deep and lasting social ties. For some, this increased their confidence in social interaction, and in the cross-generational projects, increased empathy between ages.

Partners report strengthened relationships and appetite for ongoing collaboration as a result of the positive shared experiences.

Our projects enable Artists to be connected more deeply with each other through shared delivery, and mentoring structures. The Dance Re:Ignite projects demonstrate this. Rather than working in isolation, artists were brought together through training days, joint delivery, and reflective spaces that generated mutual learning and connection. Evaluations highlight that these structures fostered a strong sense of professional community, reducing isolation and strengthening confidence in inclusive practice. Artists valued the network for support, peer mentoring, inspiration and connection.

We create strong connections to the places we work; museums and heritage, green spaces, and local communities. For example, Perform Transform demonstrated a clear connection between co-creative practice and participants' relationship to the places they live in. Through delivering dance and storytelling activity in local heritage and community venues, the Perform Transform participants were able to create work rooted in familiar environments, rather than travelling to distant cultural spaces. The evaluation

noted increased belonging, connection and shared ownership across mixed-age groups as participants co-created performances and exhibitions within their own communities.

> *"I think for us, that's kind of going to be like a place that we just drop in. Every kind of month or so just to see what else there is to discover that we didn't already know about Letchworth."*
> ***Perform Transform***

CASE STUDY: ITERATION AND IMPACT IN MUSEUMS

Over the last decade we have developed a distinctive, iterative model for engagement with heritage through dance, technology and co-creation. This evolution began with *Museums in Motion*, which first demonstrated that movement and digital arts could transform how young people experience museums.

Participants thinking museums were places for them rose from 38% to 73%

The projects enabled young people to explore and reinterpret museum collections through movement, film, sound and hands-on creative inquiry. These expanded into wider intergenerational projects, such as *A-MUSE* and *Perform Transform* that kept exploration of heritage through dance and other art forms at the centre. The projects shared the following impact themes.

INCREASED CONFIDENCE

Early *Museum in Motion* projects showed clear increases in confidence, agency and heritage engagement, with young people reporting increased confidence, new skills, and a likelihood to re-engage with heritage spaces.

SHIFTING PERCEPTIONS OF MUSEUMS

Museums in Motion 2.0 evidenced strong perception shifts where participants thinking museums were places for them rose from 38% to 73% and all participants felt their ideas were heard, reflecting a much stronger sense of cultural ownership and belonging within museum environments.

EXPANDING THE MODEL

Our later Museums in Motion: Performed Transformed iteration pushed the model further, focusing on live performance, community connection and museum-artist partnership building. It continued to demonstrate impact in improved skills and increased well-being through confidence, creativity, ownership as well as strengthened cross-sector collaboration.

INTERGENERATIONAL WORKING

Running parallel to this youth-focused strand, the *A-MUSE* projects tested how dance could bring families and older adults into museums in ways that reduced isolation, built wellbeing and fostered meaningful cultural connection. *A-MUSE* successfully engaged participants who had limited prior arts involvement, that reduced loneliness/isolation, and increased skills, and stronger family/community connections.

This project reached over 600 young participants and challenged inequality of cultural access and continued to foster art form skills

EXHIBIT 2020 AND COVID-19

The learning and impact from these projects laid the groundwork for more ambitious approaches. *Exhibit 2020* extended *Museums in Motion's* digital ambition by integrating augmented reality, film and hybrid delivery models, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic. This project reached over 600 young participants and challenged inequality of cultural access and continued to foster art form skills, demonstrating adaptability and resilience during changing and challenging circumstances.

HYPER-LOCAL CO-CREATION

The most recent stage of this iterative arc, Perform Transform, synthesised the learning from *Museums in Motion, A-MUSE* and *Exhibit 2020* into a flexible, hyper-local, co-creation model embedded in community and museum settings. With participants ranging from nine months to 80+ years and more than 6,000 exhibition visitors, Perform Transform generated deep place-based cultural connection, strengthened local partnerships and enabled our participants to connect to each other and their heritage through our inclusive, story-driven approach.

FROM THEN TO NOW

Across these programmes, we have continued to iterate expanding from the early days of residencies for young people to cross-generational community co-creation, that has continued to have heritage at its centre. Our participants stronger agency and identity. We have richer community and museum relationships. We have seen increased cultural confidence among groups historically underrepresented in heritage spaces. This decade of work has given us a robust, adaptable model of co-creation that continues to evolve in response to community needs and learning.



Perform Transform at Royston Museum. *Photographer - Simon Richardson, 2024*



Museum in Motion at Warden House. *Photographer - Stewart Baxter, 2021*

LIFELONG LEARNING

Skills development is a significant throughline of the impact we have. While we aim to develop dance, heritage and other artform skills, our projects have shown that participants develop transferable lifelong skills. Three areas where there was most noticeable impact were creative confidence, communication and teamwork.

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CREATIVE CONFIDENCE

Participants have developed confidence by expressing ideas, taking creative risks, and seeing their contributions in the final outputs. This shift was especially notable for those initially hesitant, or self-conscious. *Improvising Generations* participants became more confident in improvisation and creative experimentation, seeing themselves as dancers.

> *Once you've made that discovery it is so powerful, so transformational. It transforms the way you act. It's that discovery, I am a dancer. I don't just dance to make up the numbers."*
> ***Improvising Generations***

Across *Museums in Motion*, *Performed Transformed,* and *Exhibit 2020*, young people were required to explain, discuss, and present their artistic decisions (movement, film, sound, narrative) to peers, artists, and audiences. This led to observable growth in communication confidence. We saw similar growth in confidence was observed in the *Dance Re:Ignite* projects, with participants facilitating elements of dance workshops for tour audiences.

Teachers in the *LEAP* project increased confidence in creative facilitation, moving from observers to co-creators and eventually independent leaders of dance-technology lessons. "The teachers realised, they discovered that they could do it themselves."

COMMUNICATION

Our projects have impact on both verbal and embodied communication. In *Dancing with Light* and *LEAP* pupils improved their expressive vocabulary, their ability to articulate movement ideas, negotiate choices, and use artform terminology.

The collaborative nature through co-creation encouraged young people to develop their communication skills.

Cross-generational projects encouraged verbal and physical communication across age ranges, quite often between children and adults, and adults and other adults.

> *"We found a very good connection with each other. There was no barrier between the older generation with the younger generation…it was wonderful how the whole session was built up and created, so all of them had some chance to express through the movement, through creative artwork."*
> ***Perform Transform***

The collaborative nature through co-creation encouraged young people to develop their communication skills. *Improvising Generations* participants felt they improved their emotional communication. Artists refined communication to meet diverse access needs, balancing spoken direction with modelling, choice-making prompts, and non-verbal cues.

> *"Through embodied connections between each other, without the need for verbal language, relationships were forged and strengthened."*
> ***Improvising Generations***

TEAMWORK

Working collaboratively through shared choreography, animation tasks, or co-developed performance strengthened participants' problem-solving, active listening, and negotiation skills. For example, *Dancing with Light* and *LEAP* pupils learned about working

through differences, listening to each other, and sharing ideas, both within and beyond their social groups.

> *"The importance of working together as a team and considering things from a different point of view."*
> ***Dancing With Light pupil***

Teachers told us that teamwork outcomes extended back into classrooms and group settings, supporting behavior, resilience and social learning

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> *"I have seen a development in pupils' resilience, confidence and teamwork especially."*
> ***LEAP***

Teamwork is a pillar of the Dance Re:Ignite projects. From the co-creation of the dance performances, to taking them on tour, participants felt they were able to rely on each other.

> *"It's listening to one another with respect, valuing and appreciating each person's input. Having fun and allowing time for exploration of ideas."*
> ***Dance Re:Ignite 4.0 (Volunteer Dancer)***

Artist collaboration features throughout our projects. Not only through the project networks, but through cross-art form collaboration. Artists developed their own skills and practice through teaming up with other artists.

> *"It has been a great collaboration and it's been just brilliant, very inspiring."*
> ***Perform Transform***

LEAP school project. Photographer, *Simon Richardson, 2024*



Perform Transform at the Museum at One Garden City Letchworth. *Photographer - Simon Richardson, 2024*

CASE STUDY: A PARTICIPANT'S JOURNEY

Arthur lives in an area where we deliver regular activity. He is a young adult with autism and Tourette syndrome. He first engaged with us in 2023 with *Perform Transform*. From that project, he has continued to engage with us in a regular in-person class and latterly with *Wake Up and Dance*, where has taken on a co-hosting role. He continues to be involved in other ways when he can, including being part of a community consultative group for the delivery of *Outside the Exhibit*.

Our projects have provided Arthur with valuable social experiences.

ENJOYMENT AND MOTIVATION

Arthur enjoys the creative freedom offered by our projects. He likes that they allow him to dance freely and creatively, or act out scenes inspired by museum collections, and combine his interest in creating films with dance. In particular he likes the welcoming and friendly atmosphere created by the artists, who have encouraged him to try new things. *"That's why I thought I could just keep joining BEEE Creative, because they're very nice to me and I get to learn new things and new movements."*

Initially he felt nervous attending the sessions, but over time this has changed and he feels excited ahead of a session and looks forward to them with anticipation. *"I was nervous at the very beginning, but now as I keep going back to BEEE Creative, I'm now too excited to go!"*

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS AND CONFIDENCE

Our projects have provided Arthur with valuable social experiences. The inclusive environment of the sessions have allowed him to interact with a diverse group, including older adults, fostering intergenerational connections and social skills. He has felt supported by the artists and enjoyed connecting with other participants. This has helped reduce his anxiety and increased his excitement to participate.

> *"It helps Arthur mix with all different kinds of people… It's nice for him to mix with mainstream groups because he needs to learn those skills."*
> ***Parent***

Arthur's involvement in our projects has offered him a vital sense of belonging at a time when he has faced challenges...

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Through his participation, Arthur and his parent think he has developed a range of skills. These include:

- **Technical Skills:** He has learned to use video editing tools like iMovie, initially teaching himself but further developing these skills through project activities. He created and edited videos documenting group activities and museum visits
- **Leadership and Communication:** As a co-host for *Wake Up and Dance*, Arthur has learned to give instructions, consider music choices, and help facilitate sessions; building confidence in leading and communicating with others.
- **Creative Expression:** The projects have encouraged his imaginative thinking, as he has acted out scenes, interpreted artworks, and devised movements based on prompts.

PERSONAL IMPACT

Arthur's involvement in our projects has offered him a vital sense of belonging at a time when he has faced challenges after leaving college and struggled to find work, volunteering or other activities. Through these projects, he has gained increased independence, such as confidently navigating to sessions on his own and participating actively in group settings.

DANCE PRACTICE

Dance practice is a defining feature of our impact. It is characterised by facilitation that is inclusive, adaptable and rooted in co-creation. This approach has strengthened artists' and participants' capacity to lead, collaborate and create with confidence; embedding shared values of agency, equity and joyful participation.

Evaluations consistently praise artists for being responsive, warm, skilled and adaptive

FACILITATION

Evaluations consistently praise artists for being responsive, warm, skilled and adaptive. For example, in *Creative Connections* the artists balanced structure with creative play to meet the needs, energy and attention spans of diverse groups.

Co-creation and improvisation underpins our practice, creating a space where participants feel increasingly confident to share ideas and express themselves. For example, partners valued facilitation approaches that made activities feel safe, accessible and unintimidating, even in settings unfamiliar with dance such as museums and care homes.

This approach enabled teachers, especially in the *LEAP* project to develop delivery skills that allowed them to move towards more co-creative methods with their pupils. "Teachers developed their skills and confidence in teaching dance, furthermore through the co-creative approach, developed skills to facilitate creative dance with their pupils."

DANCE SKILLS

Across all projects, participants have developed dance skills through approaches that prioritised accessible entry points and encouraged creative choice-making through embodied exploration.

Participants strengthened their ability to generate and refine movement, use choreographic devices, work with rhythm, space and physical expression, and collaborate with others in shared dance-making. Older adults felt increased mobility and enhanced confidence and rhythm.

Across the spectrum of participants, their dance skills have progressed alongside increased confidence, creative risk-taking and creative ownership. They have been able to apply new vocabulary, techniques and movement in ways that reflect both their individual contributions and their creative collaboration.

Many artists have reported increased confidence, peer support and professional growth

ARTIST DEVELOPMENT

Artist Development is an integral pillar of our work. Through interdisciplinary arts collaboration, mentoring roles, reflective practice and work across diverse communities, artists have strengthened their facilitation approaches, deepened their understanding of co-creation, and expanded their technical and creative skillsets. Strong leadership pathways have also emerged across projects for participants. In particular the Volunteer Dancers in *Dance Re:Ignite* have become strong peer leaders. They helped welcome new participants, modelled tasks, and facilitating audience participation during tours.

Artists are asked to reflect on their practice through reflection journals and project debriefs, which directly influences our broader learning cycles. Many artists have reported increased confidence, peer support and professional growth. This confidence and growth has influenced their practice more broadly, with some going on to develop their own projects beyond BEEE Creative.

Dancing with Light School project with Scott Primary School in Bedford. *Photographer - Sam Ivin, 2022*



Dance Re:Ignite Royston group.
Photographer - Tom Hobden, 2025

CASE STUDY – AN ARTIST'S JOURNEY Q&A

Ruth came to us through the first Dance Re:Ignite project, working with a local sports trust, teaching dance for exercise. She was looking for more creative opportunities, as well as to expand her network in dance and the arts, but without traditional training in the field, she found it challenging to make inroads into the industry. Since that first introduction, she has worked on a range of projects with us, each giving her opportunities to develop.

"Working with BEEE Creative has fundamentally changed how I see myself as an artist."

How did your relationship with BEEE Creative begin?

I first became involved with BEEE Creative through the first *Dance Re:Ignite* project, where my group contributed a piece. From there, my involvement grew over several projects, including multiple *Dance Re:Ignite* projects, the *LEAP* project and the animation and dance film work. I've been involved since the very beginning in different ways, and each project has felt distinct and meaningful.

What impact has working with us had on you as an artist?

Working with BEEE Creative has fundamentally changed how I see myself as an artist. One of the big things that BEEE Creative has done for me is bring me into the world of dance and art rather than just dance and exercise. That change has opened up new creative pathways, networks and opportunities that I didn't previously feel confident accessing. That's the biggest gift it's given me.

How has working with BEEE Creative influenced your confidence and professional development?

BEEE Creative has had a significant impact on my confidence and professional development, particularly because I didn't come into dance through traditional routes. I've had a bit of imposter syndrome because I didn't come up through a dance school or do a dance degree, but BEEE Creative really helped me realise that

I do have skills. Being part of BEEE Creative exposed me to artists from a wide range of backgrounds and helped me realise that there isn't only one valid pathway into the arts. That validation was incredibly important in helping me feel that I belonged in creative spaces.

Through CPD opportunities, mentoring and collaborative projects, I began to recognise my strengths as a teacher, choreographer and creative facilitator. The trust and encouragement I received helped me build confidence in my own ideas and take creative risks, including developing my own work and stepping into leadership roles. It's given me the confidence to think, 'Do you know what? I could actually do this myself,' and just go and do it.

"It's not just about the creative work. Things are well organised, communication is clear, and there's always someone who knows what's going on and can help."

In what ways has BEEE Creative shaped your creative practice?

BEEE Creative has helped me grow as both a choreographer and a teacher. I've developed stronger skills in co-creation, problem-solving and leading others through creative processes. This has improved how I work with my own dance groups and how I support participants to develop their own material. It's made me a better teacher. I'm more patient, I have the right words, and I feel people learn quicker because I've developed over the years.

What is it about BEEE Creative' s approach that makes it effective?

What makes BEEE Creative effective for me is how supported I feel on every level. It's not just about the creative work. Things are well organised, communication is clear, and there's always someone who knows what's going on and can help. I think another part of BEEE Creative's approach is the way it brings people together.

There's a strong sense of collaboration rather than competition, and people are genuinely generous with their time, ideas and encouragement. I've met so many artists through BEEE Creative who are open, approachable and willing to share, which has helped me learn and grow.

Through CPD and working alongside other artists, I've been able to stretch myself and build confidence over time. It allows us to develop and grow as artists, and it opens up lots of different opportunities.

How has this work impacted others around you?

Because of BEEE Creative, I've been able to create opportunities for my own dancers and participants, helping them grow in confidence and identity as artists. Some of my participants have gone from not being sure of anything to leading workshops and performing confidently. That's been brilliant to see.

Looking ahead, what do you hope for BEEE Creative?

I hope BEEE Creative continues to innovate, grow and support artists in the same generous and inclusive way. I'd love to remain part of that journey and continue developing alongside the organisation.

CASE STUDY – A PARTICIPANT TO ARTIST JOURNEY

Mandy has always had an interest in dance. She joined a local dance group in her local area just after she retired about ten years ago. The dance group, which focused on creative movement rather than set choreography, joined the first *Dance Re:Ignite* project, which provided the introduction to BEEE Creative for Mandy. Through her long-term engagement with BEEE Creative and our projects, she has not only grown as a dancer but has also become a facilitator, performer, and local community champion for accessible creative movement.

Mandy found one of the most profound impacts of her involvement was being valued as a dancer, rather than seen as an 'older person dancing'

A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF DANCE

Before joining her dance group, and working with BEEE Creative, she associated dance more with structured choreography. Through a decade of involvement, she has developed a wider and deeper conceptual understanding of dance. She sees dance as:

- Self-expression, not steps.
- Connection to nature, to others, to inner emotion.
- Creative freedom and improvisation.
- A vehicle for storytelling, identity and ageing.

> *"My understanding of dance would be narrow without this. It has broadened my horizon… it's more than physical movement. You draw inspiration from life, from the environment, from emotion."*
> ***Being Seen Beyond Age***

She found one of the most profound impacts of her involvement was being valued as a dancer, rather than seen as an 'older person dancing'. She has felt valued for her artistic presence and her capability."People see you as a dancer , not as an old person."

She saw this approach reflected in the work of others she participated with, describing experiences of dancing alongside visually impaired dancers, adults with learning disabilities, professional artists, and teenagers. She felt this deeply inclusive approach valued everyone's creative contributions and broadened her understanding of what dance is and who it is for.

COURAGE AND CREATIVE RISK-TAKING

Her work with us has given her confidence to expand her dance horizons, to participate in other projects and to make steps towards creating and delivering work herself. She now regularly takes part in workshops at The Place in London, and other with other organisations. She directly attributes her experience with BEEE Creative for giving her the confidence to expand her participation.

"I'd never been to an audition for dance before, so I didn't know what it was all about. But at the end I felt, 'I survived. It doesn't matter . I participated.' It really boost my self-confidence."

Recently she auditioned for a professional production at Regents Park Open Air Theatre. She described feeling like she was not able to keep up with other professional older dancers, but didn't mind, because she was there to dance and learn. She found the 1.5 hour process challenging, but was determined to stay, and when she did, she felt proud of her accomplishment."I'd never been to an audition for dance before, so I didn't know what it was all about. But at the end I felt, 'I survived. It doesn't matter . I participated.' It really boosts my self-confidence."

She has also participated in dance festivals, creating her own solo work. What began as a tentative step in this direction developed into a piece exploring her experience of migration, ageing and belonging.

COMMUNITY FACILITATOR

Her experiences inspired her to begin leading movement sessions in her community. Initially invited by the local Chinese Association, she reframed 'teaching' into 'facilitating exploration': "I don't want to teach them steps. I want to share and enable them to discover how they can dance, with themselves, with others, anywhere." Looking ahead, she hopes to create more local opportunities, recognising that travel may become a barrier as she grows older. She is proactively looking for new opportunities where she lives, knowing she might have to create them herself. "If there isn't anything I like in [where I live], I will start something."

THE BEEE CREATIVE FACTOR

Mandy attributes some of her development to the very personalised approach of BEEE Creative, referencing colleagues who stayed to have informal conversations after workshops, and providing support beyond BEEE Creative projects.

Inspired by these experiences, she has developed her own practice as a dancer and has begun facilitating her own community sessions

"She took the extra mile in supporting my learning. For example, by attending my performance and watching my solo video with exceedingly helpful professional feedback that helps me improve my understanding of dance choreography."

The Longer-Term Impact

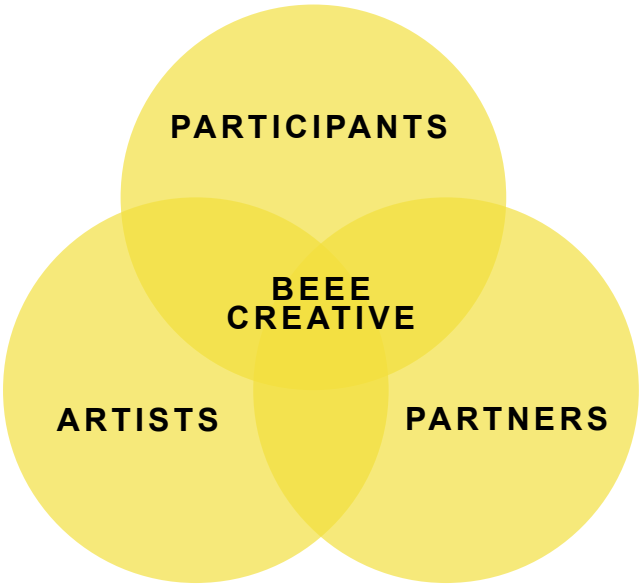
Across all her involvement with BEEE Creative, dance has become a means of connection and confidence. It has offered structure during challenging times, expanded her social world, and strengthened her belief in the power of creative activity for ageing well. Inspired by these experiences, she has developed her own practice as a dancer and has begun facilitating her own community sessions. BEEE Creative has supported her discover new confidence, an artistic identity and a sense of purpose.



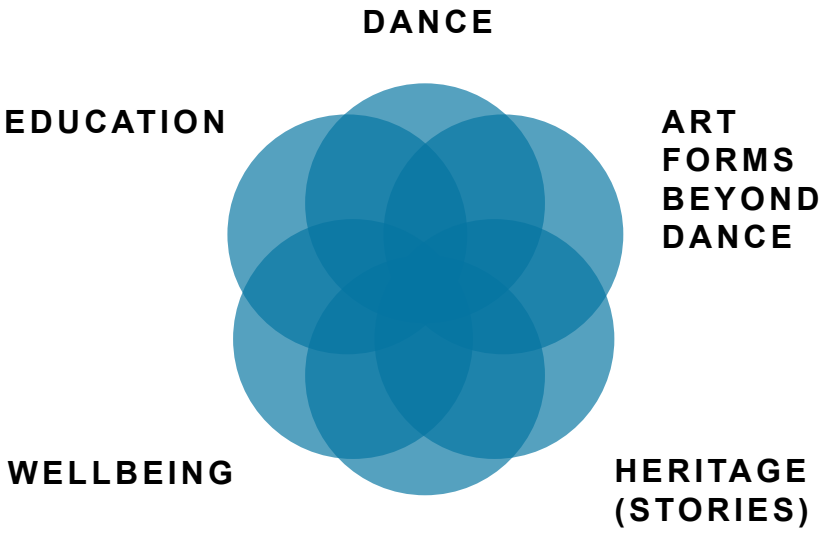
Creative Connections in Silsoe working in partnership with MacIntyre. *Photographer - Cheniece Warner, 2025*

THE BEEE CREATIVE WAY

Our practice is rooted in inclusive and co-creative ways of working that centre the voices, experiences and creativity of participants, artists and where possible, partners.



Co-creation sits at the heart of our work and by working in partnership with schools, community groups, museums, care settings and local artists, we create welcoming spaces where creativity, connection and shared authorship can flourish. This has resulted in meaningful participation, stronger community relationships, increased wellbeing and sustained engagement in culture.



INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

We work with a diverse range of participants, including young people (school groups, young carers, home-educated children) adults with learning disabilities, people with Parkinson's disease, older adults, families, and communities experiencing cultural, social, or economic barriers.

Across projects, evaluations consistently highlight our commitment to "meeting participants where they are".

Across projects, evaluations consistently highlight our commitment to "meeting participants where they are". This includes providing accessible, hands-on creative activities; adapting sessions for different cognitive, physical, or emotional needs; using simple and accessible technology to give creative agency; and embedding co-creation so that participants' ideas actively shape movement, film work, sound, and storytelling. This has meant participants, regardless of need, have consistently reported feeling able to participate fully.

Artists adjust the pace, structure, and delivery, for example *Creative Connections* noted that facilitators "adjusted sessions based on energy levels and individual engagement," and *Museums in Motion* showcasing how "hands-on activities increased engagement," especially for vulnerable young people. Careful consideration is given to group dynamics, creating emotionally safe spaces where participants feel welcome, supported, and able to contribute. We have nurtured partnerships with museums, schools, care settings, community organisations and local authorities. These long-term relationships have provided continuity, and often allowed for familiar community delivery environments, while reducing some barriers such as transport.

CO-CREATION

Co-creation sits at the heart of every project. Participants shape the artistic direction together, and artistic outputs evolve through their creative contributions and ongoing dialogue, rather than being pre-set. Participants were active authors, shaping stories, movement, sound, and digital outputs across artforms. This embedded agency, voice and ownership across all groups.

"The model of co-creation between artists and participants… gives agency and ownership to the participants."
Dance Re:Ignite 3.0

Ten years of impact and evaluation have demonstrated our commitment to genuine reflection and a desire for growth and learning

Projects are designed intentionally to be as participant-led as possible, so that they are guided by their ideas and input. Even in school settings, where there is less scope within the time and curriculum limitations, teachers found ways to apply this approach, encouraging a deeper sense of play.

We explore heritage alongside community and personal stories to inspire people to create together. We utilise technology such as mobile phones, tablets, projectors, and apps such as light painting or music making, have enabled some participants immediate access to the creation process.

Artists have reflected deeply on co-creation, they have identified tensions of co-creating in established structures and developed strategies to support shared authorship, leading to enriched experiences and outputs. Even when things might not have gone to plan, artistic choices emerged through collective negotiation, collaboration and shared goals. We have seen that this approach has built trust, shared understanding and group cohesion.

REFLECTION AND ITERATION

Ten years of impact and evaluation have demonstrated our commitment to genuine reflection and a desire for growth and learning. Reflection is built into every project, allowing for formative evaluation and in-project adaptations. For example, *Dance Re:Ignite* artists identified the need for multiple-site rehearsals, clearer timetabling, and expanded peer-mentoring structures, leading to more inclusive subsequent iterations.

Zooming out, iterative projects like *Dance Re:Ignite* and *Museums in Motion* build on the learning that has gone on before and make changes. This reflection is not just about "doing better next time" but carefully building and refining our methodology and practice. For example, Creative Connections has evolved through

reflection, with facilitators adjusting session design to better support people with learning disabilities or Parkinson's, adopting more flexible pacing and multi-sensory tools after observing how these changes enhanced participation.

Reflective debriefs, artist journals, participant feedback loops and partner consultation have enabled us to continually improve our practice resulting in programmes that are progressively more accessible, co-created and responsive to the communities we serve.

THE ROLE OF PLACE

Place has played its own role in BEEE Creative's impact. It has shaped participation, identity and legacy. We have identified artists in the places we work and supported their development. We have nurtured cross-sector community partnerships in these places, combined with the development support for local artists, which has led to stronger dance provision in these areas. We have found that our long-term investment in place has led to sustained engagement, where local community settings are now seen as creative spaces. This investment in place-based partners has expanded the reach we have, with our hyper-local approach reducing barriers for underrepresented groups and connecting with participants not reached before.

CASE STUDY: DANCE RE:IGNITE

Across four major iterations, Dance Re:Ignite has grown from an initial project celebrating creative ageing into a highly refined model of co-creative, inclusive practice rooted in relationship-building, participant leadership, and hyper-local community engagement. The early 2017 project laid the groundwork by demonstrating that participants thrive as co-creators, rather than recipients of activity. Each version had an emphasis on ownership and visibility, and demonstrated that older adults were eager to shape content, contribute ideas, and influence the creative direction of the work. The inclusion of workshops, festival sharings, and artist–participant collaboration allowed participants to develop creative confidence while ensuring the work reflected their own stories and experiences.

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DEVELOPING CO-CREATION

Dance Re:Ignite 2.0 saw a refinement in our approach to co-creation. Participants continued to contribute artistic ideas, but now also developed facilitation and leadership skills. We expanded inclusive practice through adaptive, person-centred facilitation. Taking a hyper-local approach, we toured performances and delivered festival activity to embed the work in community settings, increasing accessibility and connection. This inclusive foundation set the stage for *Dance Re:Ignite 3.0*, where co-creation continued to be participant-led and allowed participants to shape themes, lead sections of workshops, and directly input into the aesthetic of performances. This was reflected in the evaluation which stated, “an increase in confidence contributing to the creative process, and an increase in confidence creating with others.”

HYPER-LOCAL INROADS

In its most recent form, *Dance Re:Ignite 4.0* worked to integrate co-creation and inclusion as defining principles. Sessions were designed around facilitation, multi-sensory and responsive approaches, and participant-driven decision-making. The evaluation describes participants feeling “valued, connected, creative and confident.” The hyper-local model was the

most ambitious with 54 performances, 11 residencies and partnerships with 44 community organisations bringing dance directly into care homes, lunch clubs, libraries, and intergenerational venues. These settings created familiarity and safety, reducing barriers to participation and enabling longer-term involvement. Volunteer Dancers played a bigger role than in previous iterations, acting as ambassadors, supporting new participants, and helping to co-facilitate sessions.

We listen deeply to our participants, adapting artistic work to their abilities, interests and lived experience

COMMITMENT TO INCLUSION AND CO-CREATION

Across all phases, our iterative development of *Dance Re:Ignite* has been committed to co-creation and inclusive practice. We listen deeply to our participants, adapting artistic work to their abilities, interests and lived experience. *Dance Re:Ignite* has not only transformed how older adults engage with dance but also how they see themselves; as artists, collaborators, leaders, and valued cultural contributors.

LEARNING THROUGH CO-CREATION: A VIGNETTE

One participant described one of the most influential aspects of Dance *Re:Ignite 4.0* being the co-creation process. They experienced the sessions as open, inviting and genuinely enabling.

Although already familiar with improvisation, *Dance Re:Ignite* encouraged them to explore abstract concepts and to interpret those concepts through movement. They felt this broadened their creative range and allowed them to see how differently others approached the same stimulus.

Working with a visual artist added visual and tactile layers to the choreography. Seeing their own story quite literally embedded into the piece strengthened their sense of artistic contribution. The process felt collaborative and not rushed which gave them time to reflect, discuss, and experiment which encouraged confidence rather than pressure.

THE NEXT TEN YEARS

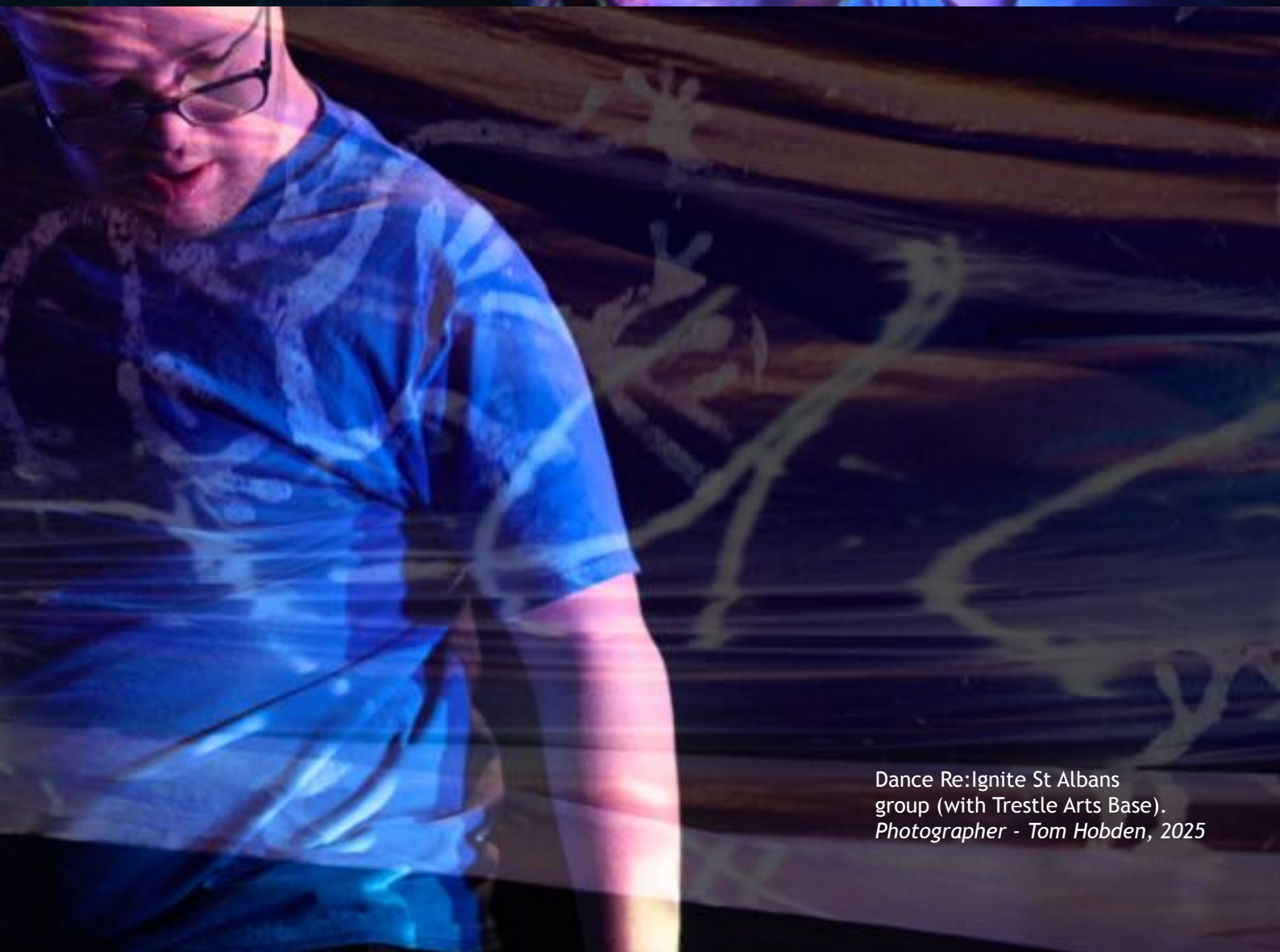
As we look ahead, BEEE Creative's next chapter is shaped by the lessons and impact of the past decade. Our journey has shown that building confidence and creative agency often begins by working with groups in isolation, providing safe, welcoming spaces where participants can discover their voice and sense of belonging. But the ultimate aim is to bring these intergenerational groups together to create diverse spaces where co-creation and ownership can thrive.

The ultimate aim is to bring these intergenerational groups together to create diverse spaces where co-creation and ownership can thrive

Artist development is a pillar of our practice. We have seen how artists have thrived when given opportunities for reflective practice, collaborative working and peer mentoring. In the last ten years this development has been project dependent, resulting in less opportunities for support during quieter periods. There is a need to create ongoing spaces where artists can continue to connect, listen, and share ideas. We want to be able to invest in continuous artistic development, to nurture the network for the longer-term benefit of the communities we serve.

We have built the foundations for strong partnerships and will focus on fewer, deeper, and more developmental collaborations that allow us to embed our practice, respond to local needs, and create lasting impact. Place-based partnerships and support of local artists will strengthen the creative dance opportunities of the county, ensuring that community settings will be places everyone can express themselves and feel like they belong.





Dance Re:Ignite St Albans group (with Trestle Arts Base).
Photographer - Tom Hobden, 2025

























This impact has only been possible thanks to the generosity and commitment of our funders, partners, participants, volunteers and supporters. BEEE Creative extends its sincere thanks to everyone who has been part of our journey over the past ten years.



BEEE Creative
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