

Attic Theatre Company

Annual Report for the year ending March 2024

The Trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements of the Charity for the period 1 March 2023 to 31 March 2024. The Trustees confirm that the Annual Report and financial statements of the company comply with the current statutory requirements, the company's governing document requirements and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP), applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) as amended by Update Bulletin 1 (published October 2019).

The company also operates under the names "Attic" and "Attic Theatre Company". References to either of these names in the body of this document should be taken as references to Attic Theatre Company (London).

Statement: Our mission is to make excellent live theatre and cultural experiences accessible to all, particularly those experiencing disadvantage, in Merton and across the UK. We regard these as twin strands of Attic's mission and of equal prominence.

Vision and Mission for the company: We believe the arts are a way of enhancing everyone's lives and we create opportunities for this.

Our report is presented under the following key areas:

Chair's Report

Purposes and Activities

Projectogram

Achievement and Performance

Financial Policies

Structure and Governance

Members' Liability

Chair's Report

There is a detailed summary below (see Achievements and Performance) of the many successful activities that took place during the year.

Attic has had a bumper year.

Our engagement activities comprised 13 community arts participation programmes. The company is rightfully proud of the reaction to these events, and I urge you to read the positive quotations from participants listed in this report as well as looking at the photographs.

In terms of mainstream theatre, Attic provided 70 performances to over 4000 people. Again, this is an Attic record. Piece of Work, written and performed by James Rowland, contributed most of these.

It is notable that the delivery of these impressive arts programmes is possible with just 3 part-time employees. The Trustees congratulate them on their energy, enthusiasm, and commitment.

Near the end of this year our Artistic Director of the last 7 years, Jonathan Humphreys, moved on. I am delighted to welcome Tom Bellerby to the Artistic Director role. Tom has experience of both mainstream theatre and community work and, since arriving, has shown he is a more than capable replacement.

Going into next year we have good reason to be optimistic.

If you would like to know more about current Attic events, please go to our website www.attictheatrecompany.com.

Paul Baynton, Chair



Purposes and Activities

At Attic we see ourselves as an arts centre without walls; commissioning, producing, and delivering projects with and for our local community; creating positive change with socially minded creative programmes across south London. We aim to promote increased wellbeing through social interaction and participation in enriching, enlightening and enjoyable cultural activities. These consist of weekly, multi art form, creative workshops and live theatre performances.

Company Activities

Attic runs a year-round programme of arts activities for local people, particularly focused in the borough of Merton.

These include:

Many Stages: Theatre Productions of new writing. New, internally produced theatre productions which tour to non-traditional theatre spaces such as community centres, parks and libraries as well as theatres and arts centres; and new collaborative productions, mentoring and/or producing associated artists' work.

Many Voices: Creative workshops aimed at young refugees and asylum seekers and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) to support their personal growth, creativity, integration and acclimatisation into the UK.

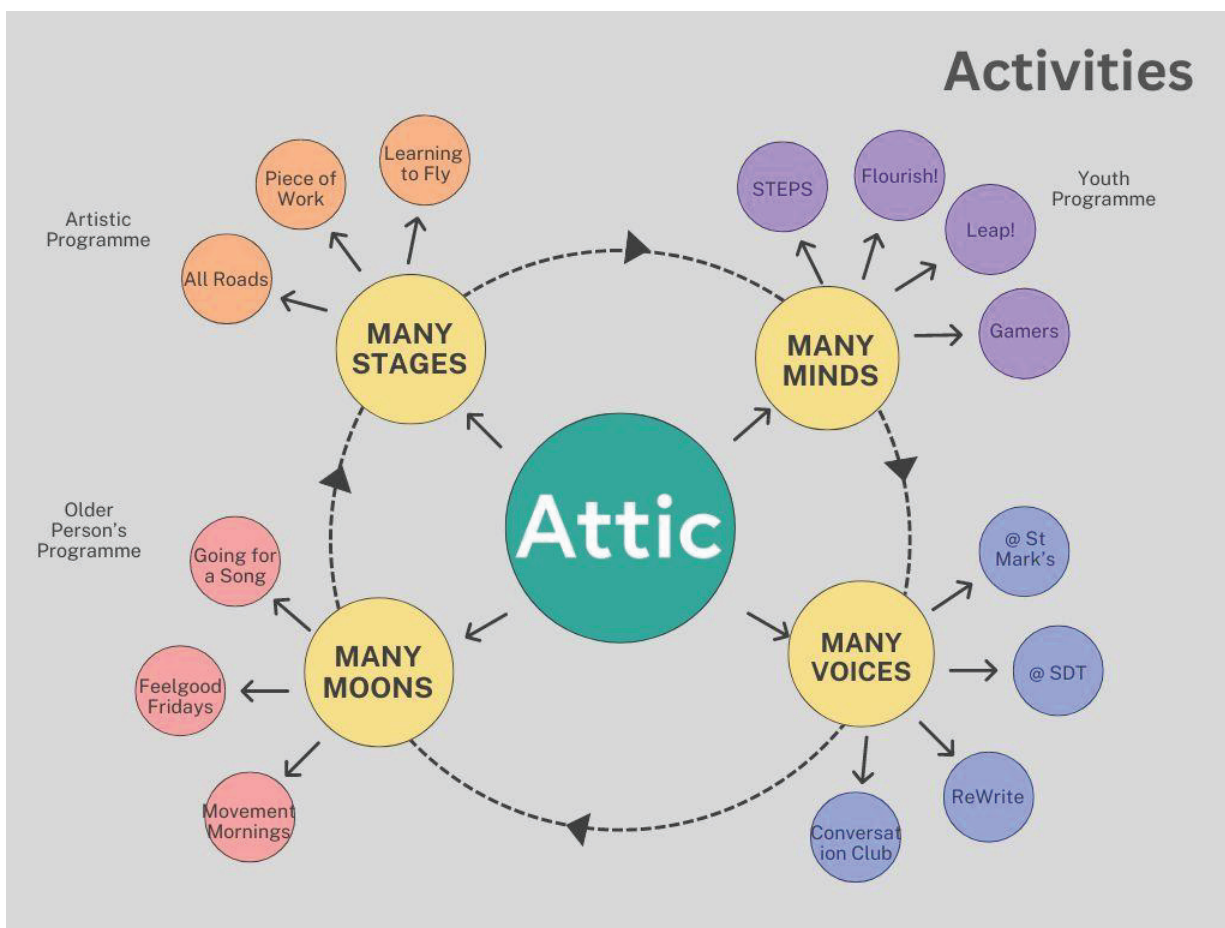
Many Minds: Creative workshops aimed at young people facing adverse environments and experiences and with low emotional resilience including N/neurodivergent and Special Educational Needs and D/disabled (SEND) young teenagers to boost their personal growth, creativity, life skills and aspirations.

Many Moons: Creative workshops for older people including dance and singing workshops which focus on boosting creativity, wellbeing, mental and physical health and combating isolation.

All our work is offered either free of charge or at a subsidised rate at point of delivery and is open to UK residents irrespective of income, race, gender, ability, sexual orientation or political or religious belief. Attic positively promotes and encourages social inclusion and strives to connect with and foster a wide range of communities through its productions, workshops and creative events.

Attic is mindful that our activities are subject to personal taste and may occasionally and inadvertently cause offence. We take the views of our audiences, participants and beneficiaries very seriously and have a comprehensive set of policies and company procedures in place, including a Diversity, Equality and Inclusion policy, Equal Opportunities policy, Child Protection policy and Adults at Risk policy. All staff are made familiar with these policies, adherence to which is a condition of employment or engagement. Feedback from beneficiaries is collated on a regular basis, analysed formally and presented for review to the board of trustees and our funders.

Projectogram



Achievements and Performance

April 2023 saw the culmination of our busiest year; with three productions and 13 community participatory arts programmes. The last of our three productions, All Roads, played its final week at the Bernie Grant Arts Centre in Walthamstow in April.

2023 – 2024 was a period of significant change with two thirds of our permanent staff moving on. Most notably Artistic Director, Jonathan Humphreys, who has been with Attic for seven years. In addition, our Chair retired handing the baton to Deputy Chair, Paul Baynton. This, alongside the substantial output of three productions mounted in the preceding year afforded us space to reduce our artistic output in readiness for new Artistic Director, Tom Bellerby, to join us in January 2024 and we focused our artistic programme solely on touring James Rowland's one man show.

The change in staffing for the community programme, whilst challenging, has clarified the requirements of the role and defined the different skill sets that the three permanent Attic team members should hold to best take the organisation forward.

In summary, we have maintained a robust community participatory arts programme throughout the year whilst securing a strong new team to continue our work; taking the time necessary to recalibrate for new artistic and governance leads.

Across our community programme we provided 36 freelance practitioners with regular work, maintained a relationship with over 50 venues nationally, engaged 6 creative artists and reached over 600 creative participants. Audiences for James' show reached approximately 3,400 over 65 performances spanning the width and breadth of the UK. With this reach and our now established reputation of working with notable playwrights such as Chris Bush and Roy Williams our artistic programme is in a strong position focusing on developing and producing quality new writing and establishing a greater industry profile.

Overall Beneficiary Statistics for activities in the period 1 March 2023 – 31 March 2024

Key achievements include:

- **70 Performances of live theatre**
- **13 Community performances**
- **56 Performance venues visited (UK wide)**
- **4,176 Audience members at all our performances**
- **333 Participatory workshop sessions delivered**
- **608 workshop Beneficiaries**
- **4960 attendances at all activities**

Overall, the make up of our participants include:

35% male/65% female

32% elderly users

51% young users

36% reporting as D/disabled users (including those with Special Educational Needs)

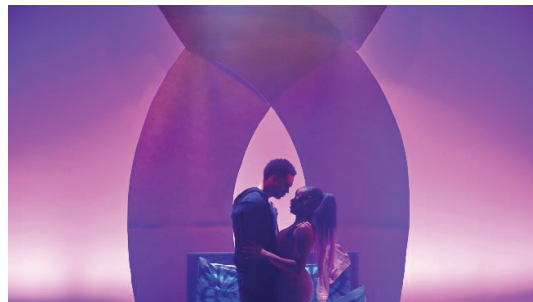
57% ethnically diverse users (from any other background than White British)

Many Stages: Theatre Productions and New Writing

- **New artistic vision** – With a new Artistic Director in place we have been developing a new voice and direction for the artistic programme of work. Leading on from its established artistic vision of both rural and urban, light touch touring, Tom Bellerby has

made contact with several local writers and artists to shape his new artistic programme. Tom's significant experience of participatory arts and audience engagement opens the way to a more locally centred programme which uses Merton as the genesis and platform for all our live performance work.

- **All Roads** - by Roy Williams OBE. Commissioned by Attic in 2018 and developed with our Artistic Director, Jonathan Humphreys. The show concluded its four-week run in the first week of April 2023. See the [2022-2023 annual report](#) for details.



- **Piece of Work** – We produced the national tour of James Rowland's brand-new show, *Piece of work*, the second in a trilogy of shows centred around life, family and friendship. *Piece of Work* toured to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in August 2023 following the sellout run of *Learning to Fly* the previous year. It was developed with James and directed by Jonathan Humphreys, Attic's former Artistic Director. The show was well received and then toured throughout the UK to 55 venues with over 65 performances, establishing a stable rural touring network and continuing our relationship with James Rowland as a producer of his work. The show played to over 3,400 audience members across the UK.



'One tries not to write that the Master Storyteller is back, but the Master Storyteller is back!... He has an innate ability to hold an audience...beautifully told, ringing with authenticity.'

★★★★★ - [Britishtheatre.com](#)

'He is a master at building tension and then breaking it with a warm smile'

★★★★ - [Broadway World](#)

"a profoundly moving and captivating theatre performance that marks a pivotal moment in Rowlands storytelling journey"

★★★★ - [The Morning Star](#)



Outcomes for Theatre Productions and New Writing:

Increased partnerships and collaborations: We solidified our relationship with storyteller and writer James Rowland, maintained relationships with over 30 venues and formed new relationships with venues across the UK. We have begun forming new relationships with local community partners and creative artists, sparking conversations and ideas to build on, contributing to the borough's artistic provision, championing locally based artists, stories and forming a new ethos of new writing and place-based performance work.

Increased arts engagement: With over 3,400 people attending our performances throughout the UK from Dumfries & Galloway to Cornwall and 434 attendees at our community performances we are continuing our provision of arts engagement to those who may not ordinarily have access to theatre and live performance.

Increased arts provision: At a time when the cultural sector is facing severe cuts and diminishing support i.e. the cost of living crisis, lower level audiences, cuts to the arts and Arts Council England's funding support, we have maintained our artistic programme albeit on a smaller scale, reducing the pressure on funding resources with a reduced output. Looking forward we will tailor our programme closely to fit with the available funds and socio-economic and cultural ecology priorities.

Increased profile: We have significantly increased our profile nationally and built relationships with touring venues to rural and culturally under-served areas. This has allowed us to reach new demographics of audiences. The networks our new Artistic Director brings will further develop the profile of the company and generate new opportunities for work, partnerships and collaborations.

Many Stages Statistical Data	Performances	Audiences	Ethnically diverse	Other
Piece of Work	65	3400	Unknown	822 audience members over 26 performances at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival garnering 4 star reviews

Many Moons - Participatory work with older people

- **Going for a Song** - Singing workshops for the over 55s to support mental and physical wellbeing, reduce isolation and increase creativity. Delivered weekly to two groups, the sessions are well established with participants particularly reporting that the social aspect and the light-hearted, enjoyable nature of the workshops are the key factors in their attendance. Community performances included the *Singfest*, a Merton musical initiative and Christmas performances at the King's Coronation Event, Merton Sustainable Fair, South Mitcham Community Centre, a local care home and in partnership with Colliers Wood Chorus for a Christmas Celebration.



➤ **Movement Mornings** – With funding support from Everyone Health and their Get up and Go initiative we remounted the open dance workshops at the new location of Vestry Hall in Mitcham. These have been very well attended and we participated in the launch event of the Merton Borough of Sport with the workshop facilitator leading a free dance workshop. Everyone Health were particularly positive about the project and provided continued funding. This alongside the Merton Civic Pride award ensures the project can continue for another 3 years.



Feedback:

'Classes are useful for the local community as a place to meet and at times helps prevent isolation'

'Someone told me about it. Love it, enjoying it very much, need to keep active.'

'It is the most beneficial exercise, fun and revitalising. Good for the ladies of Mitcham. THANKS!!!'

- **Feelgood Fridays** – Movement and dance workshops for older people and those suffering with dementia and their carers to support mental and physical wellbeing, reduce isolation and increase creativity. A new facilitator began working with the group in late 2023. With many participants of South Asian descent, we have focused much of the style of movement on this to support with resonance and memory. The group really enjoy the sessions and numbers have grown.



Feedback:

'I come to meet other people and enjoy being with other people with Alzheimer's'

'I loved it and I love the way different personalities came out'

'You are all famous, Mum talks about you all. Mum is very happy here'

'"It's so good to dance". She also said that her painful shoulder felt a little easier after the session.'

Outcomes for participatory work with older people:

Increased Creativity. Participants gain access to new artistic activities including styles of music and dance and are encouraged to express their creativity and stimulate their imaginations.

Increased wellbeing, mental health and happiness. Physical activity boosts mental wellness. Singing releases 'feel-good' endorphins and 'stress busting' oxytocins.

Reduced isolation and improved community cohesion. Regularity of sessions and familiarity of attendees supports participants to feel less isolated and allows them to build connections. They have built a social network outside of the group. Dance sessions support connection between carers and the person experiencing Dementia through music and movement and provide respite from care giving responsibilities. Sessions are as beneficial to the carer as the participant.

Improved skills and cognitive retention. Movement and musicality improve lucidity and cognitive retention. Different dance genres can also help to improve experience and

knowledge of new dance techniques, as well as provide reminiscence therapy benefits. For example, dandiya stick dances resonate with some participants' heritage likewise, traditional Jamaican songs sparked conversation and strong engagement. During open dance sessions, participants are given choreography and dance moves to improve their technique and widen their knowledge of dance styles. Moves are tailored to meet the level of frailty for older participants' but also to stretch their abilities. Singers are taught vocal skills, breath and lung control exercises, and musicality and technique. Harmonies and arrangements that may not always be familiar further stretch participants' abilities and sustain brain function.

Improved physical health and energy – Physical activity helps with flexibility, mobility, strength, stamina, movement and balance; Improves immune system; Provides a cardiovascular workout and is beneficial to lung capacity. This can prove a potentially useful benefit for maintaining lung function. All benefits which support older people retain independence.

	Sessions	Registered Participants	Ethnically diverse	Other
Going for a Song	94	32	37.3%	100% Older people 20% identifying as D/disabled
Movement Mornings	39	59	86.5%	100% Older people 48.4% identifying as D/disabled
Feelgood Fridays	34	37	87%	99% Older people 97% identifying as D/disabled
TOTAL	167	128	63% Av.	99.5% Av. Older people 52% Av. identifying as D/disabled

Many Voices - Participatory work with ESOL, refugee and asylum-seeking young people

- **St Mark's Academy, Mitcham** – workshops to support the integration and communication skills of young ESOL students, refugees, asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors. Working with two groups: low level learners and those with a stronger command of the English language. A long standing project with up to 50 students over an academic year.

Feedback:

'You changed my life. When I arrived here I didn't speak any English but you came every week and helped us and now I can. You are amazing.'

'Thank you for everything. I know I was annoying, but I enjoyed it so much'

Women's 'Conversation Club' at CARAS: (Community Action for Refugee and Asylum Seekers), Tooting – workshops to build independence, networks, employability and language skills in refugee and asylum-seeking women. Sessions provide information and guidance on navigating their new environments, exploring how to navigate their new surroundings: discussions around experiences of education, traditions etc. The sessions help acclimatise the women and enable them to build a peer network as well as give scope to build their employability skills.

As part of the Wandle Fortnight we focused on topics around nature and wildlife and encouraged participants to get outside and explore the river and parks. Numbers dwindled over the term as many participants had been moved on and CARAS having faced funding cuts no longer had capacity to support with recruitment. We are moving to a new partnership with a Merton based organisation to continue the work in a new location.

Feedback:

'she said she loved it and was excited all week to come again!.'

"Thank you for this group, I have learnt so much the past few weeks. I always look forward to it"

'Ela was keen to teach us a lot about Iran and wanted to know more about the history of the UK and how that relates to now.'

Sutton and District Training – ESOL group – This is the second year of Sutton and District Training commissioning us to support their young refugees and asylum seekers with activities that addressed confidence, English language skills and acclimatisation. This group have shown high levels of poor mental health with several safeguarding concerns. Many participants are teenagers or young adults forced into situations they have no experience of and are at risk of exploitation. Although the commission was initially for one term, we were keen to continue the provision. Therefore, we sought additional funding to support a longer and more consistent project delivery.

Feedback:

'I like learning new words in a fun class'

'I love the team games'

'It makes me feel happy'

'It gives me a good mind to have fun with friends'

Outcomes for participatory work with young refugees and asylum seekers:

Increased Creativity. Students learn drama skills and are given opportunities to utilise their imagination, stretch their creative thinking, play, experiment and have fun through artistic pursuit, including creative writing and role play.

Increased knowledge of the English language. Students learn English in an informal setting. The topics covered focus on their immediate environment and give them a vocabulary which allows them to interact with their peers.

Increased sociability. The sessions build friendships and trust within the group, allowing the participants to make friends outside of their background and culture and build support networks. Participants interact with their peers, learn more about each other and are able to find common ground to forge friendships and connect. Peer groups are expanded and this reduces isolation. They teach valuable social skills such as speaking and listening.

Improved skills. The participants learn theatre skills and life skills: how to express themselves, communicate their ideas and lead a group. They learn more English and learn about different cultures and backgrounds as well as learning more about the UK and their new environment. They learn teamwork, leadership and to listen, how to deal with simple social interaction, shopping etc.

Employability skills. Participants learn about the recruitment process in an informal setting. The sessions give them appropriate vocabulary which allows them to succeed at interview and advocate for themselves. They learn interview techniques such as expressing their ideas and clear communication.

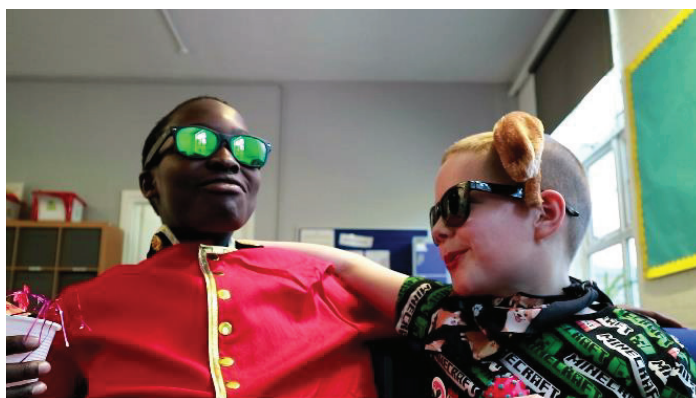
Improved confidence and self-esteem. Through shared endeavour and play they begin to trust in their peers and environment, building teamwork and they are proud of the work they achieve. They gain confidence to integrate themselves into the UK and begin to become familiar with British culture. The work builds on their attitude to life, gives them aspirations and encourages a tolerant and diverse community that embraces multiculturalism and they begin to develop personal values. The Jack Petchey Award scheme further reinforces this.

Improved behaviour, motivation and academic achievement. The work builds on their attitude to life, gives them aspirations and encourages a tolerant and diverse community.

	Sessions	Participants	Ethnically diverse	Other
St Mark's Academy, Mitcham	32	80	100%	100% Special Educational Needs (SEN)
Women's group at CARAS	22	28	100%	100% female
Sutton and District Training – ESOL group	27	34	100%	100% male
ReCreate	32	50	100%	100% young people
TOTAL	113	192	100% Av.	

Many Minds - Participatory work with young people facing adverse environments and experiences

- **Creative Arts Group** – sessions to support young people experiencing adverse childhood experiences and/or environments. Delivered in partnership with Shine Merton, a local organisation supporting young people at risk of underachieving.



Over the year we explored various different activities including puppetry, the technicalities of performance like physical theatre, improvisation and use of props and played lots of games to increase soft skills like teamwork and leadership. One term was spent focusing on script work and the other on improvisation, using all the acting skills they had picked up. In the summer term the group made their own soap opera based on a town of their own. With a new facilitator in the autumn 2023 term the group explored puppet making. However, with the regular facilitator having decided to step down numbers decreased as the year progressed and with no further funding in place we felt it would be better to explore new opportunities, drawing this project to a close after 4 years.

Feedback (What did you like about the sessions)

'I like how it was peaceful and exciting'

'I like that we get to make our own characters'

'When we do Improvisation'

- **Leap! Drama Workshops** - Holiday workshops to boost confidence and have fun during school holidays, supported by the Healthy Activities and Food fund (HAF). Four weeks of activities were delivered across Easter and Summer breaks at Green Arts Centre and in partnership with Mitcham Tonw Community Trust.

Easter activities were delivered to young people aged 8-14. Summer activities included a week for primary age children, secondary aged young people and a week of dance workshops. In all cases the students worked towards a performance over a week which played to friends and family.

Feedback:

'Every time I come here the ideas are remarkable and enjoyable'

'It has been fine I enjoyed the acting scenes and making new friends'

'I liked making new friends'



- **Sutton and District Training – Creative Media group (Gamers)** – weekly creative sessions for young neurodivergent people aged 16+ to explore their creativity and develop skills in communication, social interaction and employability. Our ethos for this project is to prioritise participants' agency and to ensure that they feel able to advocate for what they need to learn best rather than simply trying to conform to more neurotypical ways of working. We work with them to discover their potential, grow their confidence, and look forward to their future.

In the first term we designed a new, immersive game which showcased their creative skills. The theme of the second term was communication, and we explored a lot of different types of debating with the aims of developing the following skills: expressing opinions, understanding different perspectives, and persuading an audience.

This year saw a considerable increase in participants and so we engaged an assistant facilitator to support the delivery of the sessions. We also faced issues with the availability of facilitators, a drop in attendance and additional pressure to be flexible to these last minute changes. We invested Attic resources to ensure we could provide the best possible service, uplifting the assistant facilitator to co-facilitator so the planning could be shared and kept an open dialogue with SDT to ensure we could be as responsive as possible.

Feedback:

'I'm better at getting involved and having a laugh" [than before starting the group]'

'The course has had an impact on my confidence.'

- **Sutton and District Training – 'STEPS' group** – Weekly creative sessions with the STEPS group covers many of the same themes and objectives as with Gamers but delivered to a group with more complex Special Educational Needs. Staff work closely with attendees to discover their interests and hobbies and use these to explore key learning objectives for the group, such as turn-taking, active listening, and appropriate/inappropriate language. Games and creative activities make up the majority of these sessions, both providing an outlet for young people and supporting staff at Sutton and District Training in delivering their curriculum goals. This year focused on relationship building and trust,

being flexible, open, and responsive. The participants were made up of groups A and B and so our engagement with them alternated each week. This did not provide the optimum scenario for engagement but there were key moments of engagement particularly with one non-verbal participant who progressed to a point where she felt safe and confident enough to participate with written responses to exercises. Likewise, a participant had asked to do a particular activity which the facilitator was able to implement into the sessions and this was an important moment to demonstrate that the participants' can have a real say in what we do and that their ideas are creative and valuable.

Feedback:

'The feedback today from the STEPS students from their 1st session was incredibly positive. The learners were initially apprehensive about the session, as it is not something they have experienced before. But I'm really pleased to hear all the students say how much they enjoyed themselves.' (SDT Tutor)

(What did you enjoy the most?)

'Everything and laughter'

'Laughing with my friends'

'Games that are related to general knowledge'

- **Flourish** – Afterschool workshops to support primary aged children from low-income areas. Responding to NHS Merton's concerns around the physical and mental health of children and young people living in the Borough, these sessions, delivered outside where possible, give children an opportunity to exercise and get some fresh air.

Activities encourage young people to grow an appreciation for the natural world, as well as developing skills in communication, teamwork, problem-solving and emotional resilience. Children are also provided with healthy snacks and dinner to help to combat food poverty in the area.

A summer term was delivered in association with the National Trust's Morden Hall Park. Participants used the park as a stimulus and explored the food chain and animal kingdom and used different drama elements such as voice work and physical theatre. The term ended with an animal catwalk within the rose garden.

The availability of the park and the dark evenings prevented us from continuing during the winter months and we recommenced the sessions in spring at Sherwood Park in Mitcham. Themes for spring term were learning stagecraft, physical theatre and storytelling skills, incorporating both independent work, leadership and collaborative working. Numbers were low and there was limited support from our host organisation so we redirected the project to another partner.

In summary, Flourish has run for two terms over the year, with different partners and at different locations, both of which have been challenging to realise. Future iterations will be with another partner organisation.

Feedback

'I liked pretending to be a ferret who loves sausages'

'I liked getting outside'

'I loved the animal catwalk'

'I loved Flourish last year. I felt now I can express myself and my big feelings when they feel hard'

- **Standalone workshops** – In addition to our regular activities we were approached to deliver bespoke workshops supporting young adults.

Orisun Productions approached us to deliver workshops that supported their production 'Playfight' by Christina Alagarathnam. The play explored how racism determines the path young black lives take. It deals with race, adolescent mental health, criminal grooming and the adultification of black children in our education system. The workshops were developed to explore the issues within the play of racism, mental wellbeing and consent.

Discrimination workshops – The London College of Performing Arts approached us to deliver some bespoke workshops using forum theatre to grow an understanding of discrimination, explore how discrimination and power dynamics are portrayed through language and gesture and explore ways to address that imbalance to combat discrimination.

Both sets of workshops were developed by the Creative Engagement Producer and delivered by members of our freelance facilitator team. This is a potential diverse income stream and opportunity to extend the reach of our work in future.

Feedback

'We were very pleased with the workshops and the feedback has been very good. The students were engaged throughout and found it very insightful. It was a pleasure to meet and welcome the team!'

Outcomes for participatory work with young people facing adverse environments and experiences:

Increased peer group – meeting and making friends with people from other schools, circumstances, cultures and backgrounds.

Improved sociability and social skills – opportunities to chat and play, building intersocial skills.

Improved emotional wellbeing and maturity – creative and mental stimulation boosting and supporting positive mental health, preparation for and knowledge of teenage and young adult life.

Improved creative skills - learning improvisation, devising and presentation and storytelling; creative writing, character, devising, storytelling and poetry; through exploring different themes and topics imaginatively and participating in creative based, related activities.

Improved confidence and self-esteem - learning to work as a team and be creative in their approach. The performances/films at the end of the projects provide a sense of achievement and worth and the opportunity to lead engenders pride, self-worth and aspirational thinking. They are given a safe space to explore their identity and reflect on their attitudes and aspirations. They learn to work as a team, trust in others and be creative in their approach.

Improved understanding, empathy and tolerance – through listening to others’ work and presenting their own.

Improved teamwork and leadership skills – through listening and working together on a shared theme of work as well as taking turns to lead in games and exercises.

Improved Civic Pride – through knowledge of society, environment and ecological issues they begin to hold ownership in their community and are more engaged and invested in it, building emotional maturity and social capital.

	Sessions	Participants	Ethnically diverse	Other
Creative Arts Group	16	70	78%	20% identifying as D/disabled (excluding SEND)
Leap! Drama Workshops Green Arts Space	19	103	90%	12.5% identifying as D/disabled (excluding SEND)
Sutton and District Training – ‘Gamers’ group	36	42	34%	93% SEND/ identifying as D/disabled
Sutton and District Training – ‘STEPS’ group	12	12	0%	100% SEND/ identifying as D/disabled
Flourish Afterschool workshops Morden Hall Park Sherwood Park	13	16	90%	25% SEND/ identifying as D/disabled
Standalone Workshops Orisun Productions London School of Performing Arts	3	45	73%	11% SEND/ identifying as D/disabled
TOTAL	99	288	61% av.	43.5% av. SEND/ identifying as D/disabled

Financial Review

Income

Core funding awards

With the continuing core revenue grant from the London Borough of Merton, we receive financial support that contributes to our overhead costs and stabilises our infrastructure. This allows us to confidently seek funds from other sources to support the delivery and planning of our work using this funding to underpin funding applications.

Trusts and Foundations

We carried forward a level of restricted funds for projects from the previous year, namely the Jack Petchey Foundation, Everyone Health, Clarion Housing and the Merton Neighbourhood fund, all for our participatory work.

Public funding

We received a significant level of Theatre Tax Relief from the four recent productions in the preceding year, All Roads, Learning to Fly, Piece of Work and Unlocking Canons House. These had all been factored into the production budgets to support their realisation.

Private income

Our regular corporate sponsor maintained their annual contribution, but private income is a revenue stream that has not been fully explored to date due to our limited capacity.

Earned income

Earned income has become an established income stream to support our work. Our partnership with Sutton and District Training, with three commissions for their users, alongside the commissions for bespoke, standalone workshops demonstrates the increased profile and positive reputation, and the extended reach the participatory programme has developed.

Similarly, continuing our association with James Rowland, has reaped financial dividends for us as well as spreading the reach of our profile nationally.

Forward financial planning

Despite the decline in trust and foundation funding and the intense competition for grants, we have been fortunate to secure funding from local sources and have benefited from the social impact outcomes of our participatory projects, which align with the priorities of many arts funders. Additionally, a new model of touring and producing external artists' work has helped us to diversify our income generation.

To support our increased output, we have invested in our staff team and increased their salaries towards industry standards. We have also attributed increased hours to the Artistic Director and Creative Engagement Producer roles to manage the participatory programme more comprehensively; reduce the workload pressures of the Executive Director; to further the development of the artistic programme; and to build a stronger

profile both locally and throughout the arts industry. This increased capacity will be monitored for its impact as inevitably it increases the financial liability of the organisation.

Reserves Policy

Attic Theatre Company requires a level of free reserves to safeguard the organisation, protect options for future development and to achieve the following:

- the option to develop new services or expand current services in line with the changing needs of our communities
- to ensure that delays in the receipt of expected income do not interrupt services or cause serious financial difficulty for the charity
- to provide the ability to survive unexpected setbacks and problems arising from internal or external causes.

Our minimum reserves are set at £25,000, to take into account inflation over the past few years and the free reserves over and above this designated to our New Projects Fund which provides seed money for new developments in both our community outreach and live performance programme.

Total income for 2023-2024 was made up of funding awards from the London Borough of Merton revenue grant, trusts and foundations, donations and sponsorship, commissions and community subscriptions to our regular activities.

Structure and Governance

Attic Theatre Company (London) converted to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 1st March 2021. Charitable status was granted on 28 October 1994.

The charitable object for which the company was established is to "advance education for the public benefit through the promotion of the arts with particular, but not exclusive, reference to the dramatic arts". There have been no changes in the objectives since the last annual report.

The Governing Body

The charity is managed by a board of a minimum of three trustees who meet quarterly and whose powers and responsibilities are defined in the governing document. The trustees also decide on the general strategy and policies to be adopted in the pursuance of the objectives of the charity.

The Board has been made up of five trustees for the majority of the year with the Chair standing down in October 2023. The Deputy Chair took up the role upon their departure. A drive to recruit trustees from the locality, the industry and with skills required to support the organisation is underway.

The trustees are provided with a job description and code of conduct as well as a series of company policies and procedures as part of their training and induction and are informed of training courses and development opportunities throughout their tenure.

None of the trustees received remuneration or any other benefit from their work with the organisation, in their capacity as trustees. Any connection between a trustee or senior manager of the organisation or with any employed artist or production company is disclosed to the full board of trustees.

In shaping our objectives for the year and planning our activities, the trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, including the guidance on public benefit and fee charging. The charity relies on grants and other income from fees and charges to cover its operating costs.

The trustees have carried out their duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error. The trustees have assessed the risk to which the charity is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the charity and are satisfied that systems and procedures are in place to mitigate our exposure to the major risks. A comprehensive set of policies and procedures are in place and reviewed regularly by the trustees.

Staffing

In the year 2023-24 Attic operated on a daily, part time basis under the artistic direction of Jonathan Humphreys, succeeded by Tom Bellerby from January 2024 and the management of Victoria Hibbs, as Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer.

The Creative Engagement Producer is on a renewable, part time contract.

The actors and creative teams for our productions and the workshop facilitators for our participatory projects are all on freelance engagements.

This report was approved by the Trustees on and signed on their behalf by:



Paul Baynton, Chair