

# My Little Hulton Project Report

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## 1. Introduction

'My Little Hulton' saw 29 young people from Little Hulton aged between 7 and 12 take part in an arts project delivered by Walk the Plank between November 2017 and April 2018. Over 21 sessions (see Appendix A) they learnt shadow puppetry, music for performance, storytelling, script writing, mask making and production management. This led to a public showcase in Little Hulton shopping centre, where 15 young people performed two shadow puppet performances to an audience of about 50 parents and local people. The performances were preceded by 2 days of rehearsal in the Easter Holidays.

The project has been a partnership between Salford Community Leisure, Little Hulton Big Local, Walk the Plank, and of course the young people.

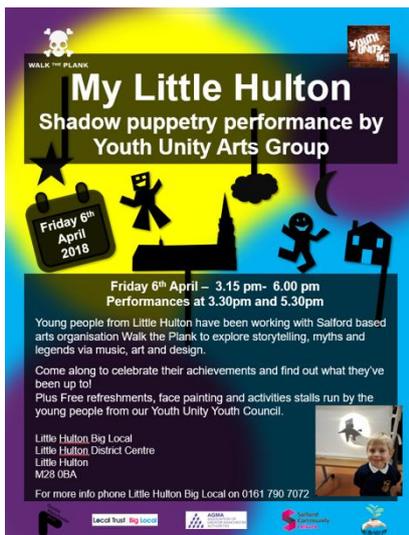
## 2. About Activity

The project was led by shadow puppet artist Austin Mitchell Hewitt and Walk the Plank project manager Ben Turner between November 2017 and April 2018. Tasters of art forms were given by Barry Han (music), Louise Wallwein (script), Brain Hanlon (mask), Alexis Johnson (production management). Plus a BTEC Performing Arts student from Salford College, Scotia, attended a number of sessions to shadow how to deliver creative making activities with young people. One young person, Toby, described what they did well; *"we made puppets and masks, learning how to make music, edit, use instruments and tell stories"*.

The following paragraph is taken from the event programme:

Since November last year, Youth Unity have been running Tuesday night creative arts sessions in partnership with Salford Community Leisure as well as their Thursday night youth sessions. Nearly 30 young people have attended and taken part in a wide variety of sessions including creative writing, music making, singing, shadow puppetry and drama. The group also went to see a performance of *Around the World in 80 Days* at the Lowry. Today is a celebration of their achievements.

## Performance



The young people responded to the theme of 'My Little Hulton' by creating two local stories. As well as making puppets they looked at writing and music to develop their scripts and ideas. The performance was on Friday 6 April 2018, with performances at 3.30pm and again at 5.30pm at Little Hulton Big Local 27-29 District Centre M28 0BA. Each performance lasted about 15 minutes and in between there were face painting and other creative activities.

Toby described his performance 'The Unicorn', he said; *"There was a unicorn group, at first there were three friends sitting in the playground making daisy chains – carrot, broccoli and tomato girls, then the sky goes dark and an evil unicorn comes and does magic on Tomato and Broccoli girls. Carrot girl knows she had to save them. The evil unicorn turned into orange people... we did it to make people laugh"*

Chloe explained her groups performance; 'Dr Octopus', she said; *"A girl called Mel went to the pound shop, she bought a book about keys. When she ripped the page a key fell out. Mel opened the door"*

*and Dr Octopus was in it. He tried to freeze Mel with his ray gun, but she ducked and there was a flash back about Dr Octopus's past, how people had tried to flush him down the toilet, which is why he became bad and hated everyone ever since. Mel looked at Dr Octopus's ray gun and changed the setting. They became friends and Dr Octopus as a reward gave Mel a suitcase of money."*

At the end of the performance the young people got certificates, and individually thanked. Each performance started with a song which had been collectively written by the young people to a tune brought in by one of the young people and was accompanied by accordion and Tristan on guitar.

The student from Salford College – Scotia – became involved at an assistant artist. She was a valuable member to the team, capable of leading rehearsal sessions with young people, helping with puppets and shaping the performance skills of the group.

### 3. Outputs

**Aim 1:** Engage approximately 15-20 young people each week and establish a core group

**MOS 1:** A core group of 15 young people attended each week. 29 young people benefited from the project overall. The numbers gradually increase month on month which is further testament to the enjoyment of those that attended (see Appendix B). The project has identified a demand for creative learning activities by young people in Little Hulton, and a dedicated core group who will benefit from the continuation of this provision.

**Aim 2:** Small project based opportunity to establish a 2<sup>nd</sup> night: two nights a week. Additional provision in a manageable way

**MOS 2:** A Tuesday evening structured arts delivery has now been established in Little Hulton Library for young people. The next project will be a project again delivered by Walk the Plank involving Carnival. With the following programme being delivered by a lantern maker artist sourced through Walk the Plank. Salford Community Leisure have undertaken a recruitment drive for Salford based community artists. The legacy of the project is that the groundwork has now been laid for a regular arts programme for at least the next year if not beyond.

**Aim 3:** To engage and consult with young people in Little Hulton to create an idea for a future outdoor event / project in the area e.g. Peel Park. Resident led project and young people are residents.

**MOS 3:** A consultation was undertaken on 10<sup>th</sup> April with five young people and their parents (attendance was low due to it being half term). They would really like a trip. And there was quite an ambitious wish list including roller coasters, bike rides, pizza, dancing, horse rides, giant candy houses, dragon rides, star making, slime making – some of which can inform what gets created in the carnival project set to commence in May 2018.

At the initial planning meeting, the staff also discussed their wishes for the project. These were as follows and were constant values and threads throughout:

- Children to have amazing artistic experiences
- To display what they do: present that in a positive light
- Confidence building
- Sharing
- Strong role models for the younger children
- Collaboration

## 4. Feedback

### Young people's

It was clear the young people greatly enjoyed the project, especially working with the lead artist Austin, who they obviously built a strong rapport with. Words they used to describe the project were 'fun', 'proud' and "great". Joseph, the youngest member of the group said; *"We had lots of fun making the puppets"*, in fact all the young people said the best thing was the puppets. Chloe said her favourite thing was "being three characters in one go...I learnt how to use two projectors, and change them really fast". They also liked learning new skills, doing the shadow puppets, doing a project, going on the trip to see '80 Days Around the World' because *"it was really fun"*, playing games and having breaks.

When asked the worst thing about the project the young people only cited their mistakes in the final performance. They said; they didn't like *"people making mistakes"*, *"people not joining in"*, *"nothing"*, *"showing her hand in the puppet show"*, and *"making a mistake when changes the screen set"*. Chloe had been really impressed by *"everyone joining in and doing a new project"*.

There was a sense that having other activities happening during the performance was also valuable. They were all very proud they had raised £30 and led a raffle. The young people said *"loads of people saw the performance"*, *"there were so many I couldn't even count"*. Chloe said she was embarrassed, and Toby said he was scared. But afterwards Chloe felt happy because she had performed in front of all those people", Lewis said he felt "proud".

### Parents

It was mainly siblings and parents who went to see the work, the young people said that their parents really enjoyed what they saw, Chloe's brother said; *"it was really good"* her mother said it was 'superb' and Lewis's mother said it was 'amazing'.

Parents were impressed by just how much their children's confidence had increased through the performance to the public. One parent at the performance said, *"it's a chance for them to shine, something they are not always given the opportunity to do at school."*

### Staff

It was agreed that having one core artist – Austin – was good as it *"allowed the group to loosen up"*. It was also noted that the focus of the young people was very impressive and despite the pressures of performance they didn't get stressed. The range of activities and how the session were structured meant it *"stayed fresh"* and the young people's confidence grew throughout the project.

## 5. Conclusion

This project succeeded in introducing a cultural programme to the young people in Little Hulton, and building a core group of at least 15 young people interested in undertaking cultural activity weekly. It worked to build the young people's confidence both socially and artistically, empowering them curate their own event to a real audience, and generate community pride. There is a proven demand for more cultural activities and visits.

It also served to grow a new relationship between Salford's National Portfolio Arts organisation Walk the Plank, Big Local and Salford Community Leisure. Salford College also played a partner role in supplying a student for work experience.. This project has been the catalyst for new partnerships that will enable us to better service our local community together.

## Appendix

### A. Timetable

#### Sessions 6-8pm

14 Nov	Austin, Ben, Andrea, Alison, Claire	Intro
21 Nov	Austin, Ben, Claire	Shadow Puppet Intro
28 Nov	Louise, Ben, Claire	Writing Scripts
5 Dec	Austin, Ben, Claire	Shadow Puppet Making
12 Dec	Austin, Claire	Shadow Puppet Making
19 Dec (7pm)	Ben, Claire	Lowry Visit '80 Days'
09 Jan	Austin, Claire	Shadow Puppet Making
16 Jan	Alexis, Claire	Production & Pitch
23 Jan	Austin, Ben	Show Story & AGM plan
30 Jan	Ben	Percussion & Music
6 Feb	Ben, Barry, Austin	Music and story
13 Feb	Brian, Claire	Mask (or Hat) (for show)
20 Feb	Austin, Ben, Claire	Story Board & Script
27 Feb	Austin, Ben, Claire	Make Show 1 & 2 - scene 1
06 Mar	Austin, Ben, Claire	Make Show 1 & 2 - scene 2
13 Mar	Austin, Claire	Make Show 1 & 2 - scene 3
20 Mar	Austin, Barry, Ben, Claire	Rehearse Show 1 & 2 with music
27 Mar	Austin, Ben	Planning event

#### Sessions 12-6pm

5 Apr	Austin, Ben, Claire	On site, tech set up & rehearse
6 Apr	Austin, Ben, Alexis, Claire	Show 1: 11.30-12noon & Show 2: 2-2.30

#### Meetings

28 Nov	Alison, Andrea, Ben, Mike – Planning Meeting
9 Jan	Austin, Ben, Alexis – Planning Meeting
30 Jan	Flyers Designed & Printed ready for distribution
10 Apr	Ben, Alexis - Evaluation session

On Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> January, there was also a short presentation / film of the project at the Big Local AGM

### B . Attendance

Nov - 41

Dec – 43 (Including one week trip to the Lowry with 12 attendees)

Jan - 57

Feb – 60

### C. Partners

<http://www.salfordcommunityleisure.co.uk/>

<https://www.salfordcvs.co.uk/little-hulton-big-local>

[www.walktheplank.co.uk](http://www.walktheplank.co.uk)