

**ARTRIX ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17**  
Director: Hannah Phillips

This annual report for Bromsgrove District Council evidences and evaluates Bromsgrove Arts Centre Trust's (Artrix) performance and impact during the financial year April 2016-March 2017. Impact is measured where possible against key deliverables set out in the Service Level Agreement between Bromsgrove District Council and Bromsgrove Arts Centre Trust. This report also articulates the ambition for the following year throughout the narrative.

## 1. Arts and Engagement Programme

### 1.1 KD1: To deliver a culturally diverse, economically viable, innovative and challenging programme at Artrix tailored to local interests and demographics

Artrix is an arts centre committed to promoting a high quality, diverse, inclusive and accessible arts and engagement programme for the local community and beyond.

During 2016/2017, 77,040 people attended Artrix, an increase of over 5,000 people from the previous year. Of this total, 25,717 were children, young people and families. We have programmed 466 performances and screenings and facilitated 475 workshop activities. In March 2017, Artrix won *What's On Readers Award* 'Best Arts / Theatre Venue in Worcestershire 2017' voted for by the public.



Figure 1. Artrix acceptance of *What's on* Readers Award for Best Arts / Theatre Venue in Worcestershire 2017



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In April 2016, we launched *Artrix: The Next Decade* Fundraising Campaign to support our work with young people. The launch event in April was funded by Birmingham City University and hosted by BBC Midlands Today's Joanne Malin and BBC Hereford and Worcester's Tammy Gooding and was attended by 300 people, existing audiences, new audiences and industry professionals. The event consisted of performances by Birmingham City University students, Dancefest Youth Dance Company, Translucent Dance Company, giving a professional performance opportunity to 40-50 young / emerging artists who were joined by established artists Barbara Nice, Julian Smith, fire artist Tallulah Blue and aerial artist Kim Charnock from Rogueplay. The event invited high levels of press coverage and social media interaction, raising the profile of Artrix across the region and beyond. The link below will take you to a very short video edit of the event.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BMFFSTbtANU>

Artrix is committed to our existing local music and comedy audiences. Tribute artists programmed throughout the year have been expectedly successful including Gordon Hendricks as Elvis, ELO Experience, Genesis Connected, Fleetwood Bac and the Counterfeit Stones all of whom have performed to sell out audiences. Artists, Howard Jones, Cara Dillon, Clare Teal, Tom Robinson, The Manfreds, Blake and Sons of Pitches have drawn large committed audience numbers, similarly well-known television comics such as Ed Byrne, Mark Steel, Jason Manford, Gary Delaney, Mark Watson, Christian O'Connell, Romesh Ranganathan and Rory Bremner have sold out at Artrix this year. Evenings with Glenn Tillbrook, Simon Weston, David Starkey, David Hamilton and Rufus Norris, Director of The National Theatre originally from Bromsgrove have all been a success.

NT Live, RSC Live and Royal Opera House Live Screenings have all continued to draw large audiences. Bromsgrove Arts Alive groups continue to hire the venue to present their own work. The Director of Artrix is now a Trustee of Bromsgrove Festival so Artrix are active in programming Festival events and Bromsgrove Concerts continue to provide Artrix with a classical music programme. We are very keen to support emerging talent in Bromsgrove. We have developed our own resident company of emerging artists, Outspoken, making new work for and with young people. We have also programmed scratch nights and open mic nights for emerging talent and have gone on to support some of these emerging artists by programming their first full piece of work or a preview of a new piece of work in the studio. This year, we also welcomed VERVE, the postgraduate performance company of Northern School of Contemporary Dance (NSCD) to Artrix followed by Julian's Lloyd Webber's Birmingham Conservatoire Showcase which had an audience of 77 and received very positive feedback from our classical audience in Bromsgrove. In October, we hosted the Beethoven Quartetfest where the Dante Quartet played all sixteen of Beethoven's string quartets in seven concerts alongside four talks and a master class for Birmingham Conservatoire students. This event crossed over with our exciting immersive Horror at the Drive-in event. We managed to employ eleven emerging artists through our BFI Blackstar funding for our Drive-In screening of *Blade* allowing us to be part of a very important

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campaign increasing black representations on screen. The following link takes you to a short video edit of the evening.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywoH03oWrac>

Our Drive-in events which have taken place in the car park over the past year have been part of our ambition to diversify our programme and our audiences and to use our spaces in an innovative way. The Drive-in events premiered with the sell-out screenings of *Grease* which sold out over two evenings as did our kid's drive-in event which involved them making their own cars as a craft activity and sitting in them and watching a screen of the Disney film, *Cars*. This event obtained increased media coverage supported by Artrix also screening a sing a long version of *Grease* in the auditorium in partnership with BBC Hereford and Worcester for BBC Children in Need. The media attention from these events also increased sales for our annual outdoor screening at Avoncroft which achieved double the usual audience numbers. The Valentine *Dirty Dancing Drive-in* also sold out and we welcomed new audiences for an LGBTQ focused Drive-in screening *Carol*. Similarly, Jen Brister welcomed new audiences as part of our programme for LGBTQ History Month following the annual LGBTQ networking event. We celebrated International Women's Day with an exhibition launch of Take 13 exhibition and a *Stand Up for Women* comedy evening headlined by Jo Enright and Barbara Nice.

Comics Zoe Lyons, Nish Kumar and Shazia Mirza saw growing audiences as did new events in the café bar such as *Comedy with Cake* and *Licensed to Rhyme*, a monthly spoken word evening co-hosted by Maggie Doyle, Worcestershire Poet Laureate Emeritus, and past Birmingham Poet Laureate, Giovanni "Spoz" Esposito. We were very heartened that Sonia Sabri's performance of *Salam* attracted an audience of 50 and look forward to welcoming her back in 2018 with a new piece of work. Sampad brought a South African dance company, Tribhangi Dance Theatre in Sukuma which saw a growing studio audience of 33 and we received very positive feedback from audience members about bringing this work to Bromsgrove. Beth Vyse comedic discussion of her own battle with breast cancer and *The Eulogy of Toby Peach*, a light hearted theatre performance which looked at Toby's own experience of cancer attracted small and very specific audiences as did other areas of our more contemporary, risk taking programme such as *Queersay*, a showcase of queer spoken word and *Meet Fred* by an inclusive company Hijinx, a professional theatre company of actors with and without learning disabilities

We have introduced relaxed live performances at Artrix which we premiered with Vamos' return of *The Best Thing*. Relaxed performances are open to all, but specifically designed to welcome those who benefit, for whatever reason, from a more relaxed environment, such as people with sensory and communication disorders, a learning disability or autism spectrum condition.

We have also introduced parent and baby screenings to our programme to encourage parents to bring their baby along to a film screening with them. We have been focusing on our early years and family arts and engagement programme and provision at Artrix. We are

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hopeful that if we can engage babies at Artrix at the onset of their lives they will develop a meaningful relationship with the arts centre throughout their childhood. We have opened a new café which is now open 7 days a week which is regularly used by many local parents and babies / toddlers, we have a free soft play centre for 0-3 year olds, IPADS with free Wi-Fi connection and a large outdoor musical instrument all funded through Divisional support. We have also ensured this space is family friendly, with access to high chairs, bottle warmers, baby food, baby wipes, breast feeding screens and baby changing facilities. Artrix has been awarded with 'Family Standards' recognition; Families are coming to recognise the Fantastic for Families and Standards logos as badges of excellence.

During the last year Artrix has hosted 4 Baby Raves, CBeebies meets 90s rave culture for all the family to enjoy with guest appearances by Peppa Pig and Iggle Piggle! These events sell out immediately online and are engaging new family audiences at Artrix and bringing new people into Bromsgrove. We are now also hosting *Bubble Discos* for a slightly older age group and for private birthday parties. Our family programme this year has included Cbeebies, *Sid's Deep Sea Discovery Show*, a stage version of Nick Sharratt's *Shark in the Park* and *Santa Saves Christmas* which welcomed a full family house on Christmas Eve.

### **2017-2018**

Throughout 2017-2018 we look forward to continuing to diversify our programme and developing our audiences. We are eager to welcome Vamos back with *Finding Joy* and some very focused work around engaging older people living with dementia and their carers' as audience members. We are now an official member of the Dementia Action Alliance. We also intend to do further work around our inclusive and relaxed offer and we look forward to welcoming Anjali Dance Company in November 2017 who celebrates the creative abilities and artistic potential of people with learning disabilities and demonstrates exciting new possibilities in dance. We are also very pleased to have received a BDC Equalities and Diversity grant to support some audience development work around LITE, a powerful, multimedia stage production, exploring the theme of identity and self-image through a young black woman's eyes.

### **1.2 KD2: To contribute towards maximising community participation in the arts**

As part of the New Generation Festival which formed part of Bromsgrove Festival 2016, Artrix worked with Lickey Guides and Cofton Brownies delivering dance workshops. There were craft and dance projects at Meadows First School, Dodford First School, Sidemoore First School. Renowned Physical Performance Company, Highly Sprung delivered physical theatre workshops to North Bromsgrove High and South Bromsgrove High Schools. Transitions Dance project worked with Catshill First School, North Bromsgrove High School and Parkside Middle School culminating in performances on Bromsgrove High Street. Artrix Youth Theatre performed their devised piece on the High Street as part of Bromsgrove



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Festival and Artrix Show Choir performed in Sanders Park. Artrix also hosted Worcestershire Dancing, Boys Make Noise and North Bromsgrove Dance Day as part of the Festival.

Earlier in the year, we hosted a busy Diwali Family Fun Day followed in the summer by Artrix Family Fun Festival which was very well attended and included a juggler, magician; sell out samba workshop, contemporary dance workshops, fully booked summer schools and further family activities in response to parents requesting to do more activities with their children.

Artrix was commissioned by Bromsgrove District Council to run a lantern parade engagement project, lantern making workshops were held at Artrix, Bromsgrove Library, Meadows first School, Catshill First School, Sidemoore School and St John's Church culminating in a parade through Bromsgrove High Street. This was the foundation for a much bigger project which will be held in December 2017 entitled The Festival of Light, Bromsgrove 2017.

Artrix youth theatre and choirs are expanding. We now hire our space weekly to Rhythm Time and Creation Station to provide Bromsgrove with further engagement activities from well-known brands of arts provision. There are also further plans to develop our participation activities for early years, children, young people and adults commencing in September 2017.

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Translucent Youth Dance Company are now resident at Artrix one evening a week. They are developing high quality new dance work in and out of the studio.



Figure. 2 Translucent Youth Dance Company performing on Bromsgrove High Street 2017

Volunteering opportunities at Artrix provide a strong link into the local community. There are 67 active volunteers at Artrix who have volunteered within the last 3 months. The volunteers run the bar, sell merchandise and usher. It has been a challenging time for volunteers and staff alike. Under new management and an ever changing financial and political climate there has been a high level of change within the organisation. Many volunteers have decided to leave; however, many have decided to stay and we have also welcomed new volunteers under the new leadership of an employed Volunteer Coordinator, Sarah Benfield. We are now also starting to welcome younger volunteers to Artrix; we have 9 volunteers aged 18-24 years, 23 volunteers aged 24-44 years and 48 volunteers aged 45-64 years. We also support Higher Education and Further Education work placements and have now introduced supported internships for young people with learning disabilities in the café, FoH, and technical placements.

**Why do people volunteer at Artrix?**

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'I would like to say that being a volunteer is a life line for me in getting through my grief in losing my husband. The opportunity in meeting people at the artix whether volunteers, staff or theatre goers for me is brilliant.... I do not have family in Bromsgrove so this opportunity helps to overcome my loneliness....'

'I love to have a joke and a laugh with all those I have the opportunity in meeting.... It makes me feel uplifted and that I am not a waste of space....'



Figure 3. Volunteers at Artrix Volunteer Party hosted by BBC Hereford and Worcester's Malcom Boyden



Outspoken is now the resident company of emerging artists based at Artrix making socially engaged work with and for young people. This is in line with our strategic objectives to develop more challenging projects with an emphasis on marginalized, vulnerable and hard to reach groups of young people and to produce our own work for young people with a company of emerging artists dealing with specific health and wellbeing issues, demonstrating social impact, and using digital technology to enhance young people's engagement. Our first piece of work was *Get it On* commissioned by Umbrella, Birmingham and Solihull's Sexual Health Services (NHS) and also supported by Birmingham City University and the Arts Council of England. *Get it On* was a 65 minute performance for 13-18 year olds. It was a fusion of live music, singing, dance, spoken word and digital technology. Its key messages were around peer pressure to have sex, sexual health specifically focusing on chlamydia and chlamydia testing and health relationships. The piece was performed in Birmingham at ACE Space for 660 young people. We also performed the piece to 198 students from Stratford College the following week, following which the piece was performed at Artrix, Bromsgrove for 499 young people over a 3 day period.

Danielle Bartlett, Teacher of Physical Education & Psychology at North Bromsgrove High School said:

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'I thought the show was outstanding. The students enjoyed the performance because it allowed them to have opinions and engaged with them in ways they could relate to in order to tackle some really important issues'

The following link takes you to an interactive online resource which was created to accompany this performance:

<http://outsprokengetiton.co.uk/>

Following the success of *Get it On*, over 900 people, 800 young people attended Outspoken's latest production, *Catfish*, a new piece of live performance fused with digital technology which explored issues of online grooming and Child Sexual Exploitation, devised and directed by Artrix Director, Hannah Phillips. The piece was funded by Birmingham City University Worcestershire County Council arts grant and Divisional Fund and the Arts Council of England. The project was in partnership with C&T who developed the smartphone digital technology for the piece. The following link will take you to a short video edit of the piece:

[https://youtu.be/c4XZLUg\\_ohg](https://youtu.be/c4XZLUg_ohg)

We have had some very positive feedback from young people, schools, the arts council and people working in the sector.

'The vital messages around safe behaviour online for young people are one that is stressed, laboured and refreshed in schools up and down the country each and every day. We are always trying to find new and engaging ways in which to embed the messages of risk and how to keep young people safe. *Catfish* by Outspoken Theatre Group did this in a super-powerful manner that had all our students focused and connected – way better than any member of staff ever could!'

**Adam Smith | Deputy Head teacher**  
**North Bromsgrove High School & Sixth Form**

**Comments from students at Pedmore TC:**

'The performance was really good and the message very clear.'

'I think the performance was great and it taught me what could really happen.'

'The performance was amazing, how it was set up was clever. I would definitely watch it again.'

'I enjoyed the performance, it was emotional, I cried and laughed, it informed me of grooming, rape, child exploitation and what the consequences are. I would rate it 5\*.'

## **2017-2018**

Over the next two years Artrix / Outspoken are committed to working with young people, the arts and mental health as part of a two year project entitled, *Disorder*. This will include a new piece of work made by Outspoken for young people called *Hyped* which has been funded by Birmingham City University and Open Door Youth Counselling Services (NHS). This piece of work has also been commissioned by The Birmingham Repertory Theatre and The Courtyard, Hereford offering a new touring income stream for Artrix. There will also be a schools arts and mental health festival involving local schools and we will also be working with young offenders and those at risk of offending in partnership with Worcester Arts Partnership, funded by West Mercia Police.

From September 2017, we will be developing our participation offer at Artrix for children and adults and we will be offering dance classes for early years, children and adults, Pilates, family yoga sessions, daytime singing for over 55s and photography masterclasses.

A new Youth Theatre Director is in post working in schools settings and running young people's programmes at Artrix. We will also be offering free lantern making workshops in schools as part of the large scale engagement project, *The Festival of Light, Bromsgrove 2017*.

Artrix arts centre and Rose Bruford College have partnered to offer Bromsgrove a unique Foundation Acting course which will offer conservatoire training within a professional arts setting. Our 20-week Foundation course is a rigorous and in-depth training that will give students' skills and techniques invaluable either as a preparation for further vocational training at drama school, university (Degree or MA/MFA) or to consolidate existing experience. It provides an opportunity to explore different strands of work either as an actor with text or as an actor musician. The course will launch in September 2018 and run for 2 terms, Monday to Thursday 9am-4.30pm at Artrix. There will be an annual scholarship available for a young person from Bromsgrove.

## **2. Business Development**

### **2.1 KD3 To manage Artrix efficiently, effectively and economically viably**

In July 2016, the Trustees and Executive Management team went on a Board away Day, held at Avoncroft Museum. This was facilitated by an external consultant, Angela Galvin and explored the following areas through surveys, practical activity and discussion:

- Governance and advocacy
- Developing and diversifying
- Building and Sustaining

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An action plan was created which informed the development of the business plan 2017-2018. Since the away day, Trustees have had a much more developed understanding of Artrix and the ambitions for the arts centre. Trustees have also been much more engaged within the arts centre attending performances and events, meeting staff during working days and attending staff meetings and volunteer forums. In 2017 /2018, we plan to recruit further Trustees; we are looking for greater diversity on the board to reflect the communities we are attempting to engage and to broaden areas of expertise and experience to support the business as it develops. As we look to increase fundraising through campaigns, donations and philanthropy, we require board members who can lead on fundraising activity, network and raise the profile of Artrix.

It has been an uncertain time for staff and volunteers through a necessary time of change management since the appointment of Interim Director, Ros Robins in 2014 followed by the appointment of Director, Hannah Phillips at the end of 2015. Some staff have chosen to leave, for other staff their roles have changed and there have also been new appointments.

There have been changes to staff and volunteer meeting structures to develop more effective communication within the organisation in response to feedback from the team. Previously, the Communication and Consultation Forum met with representatives from the Board, Staff and Volunteers. This Forum has now disbanded, volunteers now have 2 meetings per year where all volunteers are invited and at one of these meetings, staff and Trustees are present. Staff have quarterly meetings, 2 of these include Trustees attendance. Regular team meetings and 1-1 meetings have continued. We will be introducing a performance management system at the end of 2017. We are also looking to rewrite the staff handbook, update all policies and conduct internal and external Health and Safety audits towards the end of 2017 and the beginning of 2018.

The General Manager and the Director attended safeguarding training with artwork at mac on Tuesday 28th February. The result of this training is that the Director will re write our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies and then the full team will have safeguarding training with artwork which will be developed specifically for Artrix and around our policies. Every Artrix employee will be expected to do this training, this will include freelance staff. If for any reason anyone can't attend the training on the day planned they will attend a later session with volunteers or be sent to a session off site. Artrix is committed to the safeguarding of young people and children and it is essential that every staff member fully understands our policies and procedures. It is very important that everyone understands our policies and procedures especially the young people we work with so the Director will also write a policy specifically for young people in collaboration with young people to ensure it is user friendly.

### **Financial Review**

Artrix key financial objective is to ensure financial stability and sustainability so that it can pursue its artistic and engagement aims and objectives. Artrix receives income from box



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office, fundraising, commercial hire and fees for engagement activities. Accounts are currently being audited; a full set of audited accounts will be submitted once received.

The principal source of funds of the charitable company grants were from Bromsgrove District Council of £60,890 and rental and grant income from HoW College- £55,219. Project grants were received from Worcestershire County Council, Worcestershire County Divisional Funds, Bourneville Charitable Trust, Arts Council England, Bromsgrove District Council Equalities and Diversities Grant, Birmingham City University, Umbrella Sexual Health Services, BFI and Arts Connect.

The fundraising strategy has three major strands: Individual Giving; Trusts and Foundations and applications to Public Bodies.

We exceeded our individual giving fundraising target in 2016/17 with a total of £13,076 raised in the year. This funding is for our work with and for young people during 2017/2018 and will be invested as match funding in funding applications to Public Bodies and Trusts and Foundations.

Artrix is part of various consortiums of organisations applying to the Arts Council for funding including a Celebrating Age bid. Organisations include Dancefest, Malvern Theatres, the Commandry, Pershore Number 8, Museums Worcestershire and Uplift. Establishing a programme of Celebrating Age activity across Worcestershire, Artrix will be one of four hubs. We are also part of Bromsgrove Arts and Cultural Consortium making an application to generate a more inclusive, high quality cultural offer in Bromsgrove.

We have employed a Development Consultant for 1 day a week for 6 months to increase our funding application output and to look at developing our relationship with local businesses and developing a strategy for corporate sponsorship. North Worcester Business Leaders have selected Artrix as their chosen charity until October.

**2.2 KD4: To build sustainable partnerships that demonstrate value and help BACT perform effectively**

Artrix continues to be part of the following consortiums; Working in Partnership for Arts and Culture in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire Arts Partnership and Arts Lab, Worcester.

Artrix continues to maintain existing partnerships with Bromsgrove District Council, Heart of Worcester College, Bromsgrove Arts Alive groups and the Bromsgrove Festival. However, Artrix also seeks new relationship to secure future investment and sustainability and has developed new partnerships with Birmingham City University and Rose Bruford College, London.

Artrix has joined the Bromsgrove Events Team Meetings and is working closely with Bromsgrove Town Centres Manager, Cheryl Welsh using the creative arts to enhance

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engagement in the Town Centre, as research demonstrates; the creative sector can have a significant impact on the local economy.

### **2.3 KD6 - To manage a sustainable business model**

Over the past 3 years, Artrix has reviewed its business plan, strategies, artistic programme and resources. We have changed the strategic direction of the organisation. The new business plan for 2017-2020 has been written following a year's process of consultation with stake holders. The draft plan was shared with the Board of Trustees and the staff teams for further feedback. The revised document is currently being implemented by the Artrix team and will be annually reviewed.

By the end of the next three years we will:

1. Have developed our artistic and engagement provision, ambition and profile
2. Have developed audiences and participants - particularly amongst young people
3. Have diversified and grown our income and resources to secure greater sustainability in the long term.
4. Have developed new strategic partnerships
5. Have developed our use of digital technology to enhance engagement

Artrix will be diversifying and increasing income in the following ways:

- Increase in programme sales
- Increase in commercial hires - theatre hire packages, conferences & meetings, birthday parties, catering packages, office / corporate hire
- Increase in café and bar income
- Increase in workshop income, youth theatre programme income and income from work in schools
- Artrix will be producing our own work- income from commissions, public and private funding
- Diversifying fundraising streams to include business sponsorship and investment
- Touring and outreach income – productions touring other venues, Artrix commissioned to run festivals, outdoor screenings and events at alternative sites
- New strategic partnerships such as Rose Bruford College, London and Birmingham City University

### **Marketing & Audience Development**

60% of tickets are now sold on line and there are more frequent e-communications to a 17,000 strong mailing list; however, we were still not using social media strategically or effectively. A digital marketing consultant has been brought in 1 day a week tasked with raising the centre's online profile amongst its target audiences, and particularly amongst family and early years audiences and young people, with the ultimate aim of increasing the numbers of visitors from these segments.



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We will be launching a new website in July and we have also had a new logo developed and increased our branding opportunities.

There is also a new Press Officer working one day a week focusing on raising Artrix's media profile.

### **Building Developments**

Building developments through 2016-2017 have included:

- A new kitchen and cellar
- A new café / back bar refurbishment
- Cloakroom construction
- Electric entry system floors 1 and 2
- Dressing room 1 refurb
- NEC telephone system

### **2017-2018**

There are plans to create further office spaces and refurb existing spaces to increase rental income. We will also be purchasing an orchestra pit infill to increase our capacity and flexibility in the auditorium. Following an investment of £4,000 from Bromsgrove District Council, Artrix will be putting out to tender an opportunity to conduct a capital campaign feasibility study. We need to explore the feasibility of a capital development plan through 2018 if we are to fulfil our future ambitions.