



## Inside Out Community

### Annual Report 2015-16

What a year! So much has changed over the last year, yet I hope that for the people that come to Inside Out our groups and sessions have continued to inspire, fulfil, and provide an enjoyable opportunity to meet other people, share ideas and be creative.



This is my first report as the Chair of Inside Out, my links however go back to the start when Pete and Jan founded this great charity. I am so proud to be part of Inside Out and I am very aware of the hard work and commitment that Pete and Jan have given over the years. Their stewardship is always so warm, friendly and enthusiastic. They created and continue to sustain a culture that delights in art in all its forms and they demonstrate the wisdom that knows that such a culture will inevitably be nourishing for the heart and soul.

Pete Watkins who was Chair from the start, has given so much to Inside Out, and he is still so very active. To many he is Inside Out and he is certainly an act that I can't follow! I have worked with Pete for a number of years now, he was my Tutor when I was training to be a nurse, and he has always inspired me. He is so thoughtful and committed and also so warm and generous. Pete remains a very active Trustee and his encouragement, guidance and support has been so valuable to me this year.

#### So what has been going on in the last year?

Inside Out through the generous funding of the **Esme Fairburn Trust** were able to recruit a Programme Leader last year. We were so encouraged by the response we received from our advert, and we then had a very difficult choice to make. The quality of all the applicants being so broad and so high. All shared our passion for the arts and the impact that engaging in creativity can make to bolster and sustain a sense of emotional wellbeing. Lawrence Bradby was the successful applicant and joined us in September.



Lawrence immediately brought us a focus and a presence that was sensitive to all the groups and so imaginative, thoughtful and reflective regarding the overall work of Inside Out. It wasn't long however before he was given an unexpected challenge!

In October we were told that we could no longer use the Volunteer Matters building and so had to find a new venue for our Friday open group and Marking Your Mark. Faced with this challenge, and then sharing our concerns with the community of groups in Ipswich, we were delighted with the support and assistance that people showed towards us. In particular Jo Carrick and David Newborn from **The Red Rose Chain**, with whom we had collaborated closely in recent years, and Cad and Bruce who offered us space at their new base in South Street.



Paula Bowman was again amazing in her commitment to the groups and getting things arranged for our moves, and the Friday Open Group relocated to the wonderful Avenue Theatre home of the Red Rose Chain, and Making Your Mark embarked to South Street.

Whilst all this was going on Lawrence was working on utilising the funding that we received from Comic Relief to establish a group for older people. With help from Pete and Jan in particular, **Creative Lives** was envisioned and created. Now running on Wednesday afternoons at the Avenue Theatre, Creative Lives is already a very warm and welcoming space where people can utilise the skills and passion of local artists to lift their spirits and engage with their creativity, their feelings, their peers, the wider community and have fun.

**The Wednesday Music Project** continues to be a space where all are welcome to come and share their talents, their ideas and build their confidence and skills. New work is always being produced and the second CD is in production. The amazing Not Beaten Yet band opened the May Day celebrations in Alexandra Park last week. We are so grateful for the time and commitment of the volunteers and the regular members of the group.

**The Friday Open Group** appears to have found a brilliant space at The Avenue Theatre, the staff there couldn't be more welcoming. There always seems to be something new, interesting and exciting going on, and this can only serve as an inspiration for whatever activity is being provided. Sian, Paula and all those who keep the Friday group going do such a great job and contribute enormously to creating a safe and welcoming environment.

**Making Your Mark** has also now been welcomed at The Avenue due to there being building work going on in South Street. The group which collaborates with the Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust, has continued to provide a safe space for young people led by local artists in exploring creative mediums for expression.



David Hardy who is an Art Therapist with NSFT has been a rock for the group through the many changes and challenges that it has been through. His consistency and patience has meant that the group remains strong and the people who attend can feel that they are in a place where they can participate fully in the arts. Thank you David.

Taking time to thank people is a very important part of this review and of what we at Inside Out are about, we are about people. People and creativity. So thank you to everyone that is part of Inside Out in whatever capacity. Thank you to our friends who have been so generous and supportive this year, and over all the years that we have been around in Ipswich. We hope that you will be with us next year as we look forward to many new and interesting experiences, and to keeping the existing groups providing the opportunities that they always have.

I would like to say an especially big thank you to all the artists who lead our workshops. Your skill, your creativity, your kindness and support is truly valued and what we do wouldn't be possible without you. Inside Out is about the art and artists, whilst there is a focus on how this can enhance wellbeing, this is only possible by focusing on the art. People who come to our groups are artists participating in creativity, they are not defined by anything else. We know that we have to be sensitive to the needs of funders and that we need to be able to justify and measure what we do, however we will always strive to do this in way that reflects our core values, without these we have nothing.



We have also been blown away by the generosity of others who have donated to keep our unfunded groups, like the Friday Open Arts session and the Music Project active and strong. The Ipswich Unitarians made us their charity to support over the year and gave us a cheque that goes a long way to providing for what we do. I know that they work very hard for whoever they choose to support, and my daughter Izzy and I were delighted to meet them, attend a service and thank them for all that they have done for us.

We organised an art exhibition at the Avenue Theatre, which again Red Rose Chain were so helpful and supportive in hosting. Our Secretary Gemma led the way with so much hard work and efficiency, and we had a brilliant evening showcasing so much local talent and at the same time raising money for Inside Out!



Sadly Lawrence left us at the end of March, we were sorry to see him go, however wish him all the very best. He is able now to work closer to his home, and to have time developing his own art, as well as helping a similar project to ours in Norwich. Although only with us for a brief time Lawrence helped to steer us through a difficult move and his quiet, thoughtful and careful questioning helped us to look at ourselves and look to the future with renewed energy and desire.

Over the last year the Inside Out Community have delivered; 40 Friday Open workshops, 40 at Making Your Mark, 22 at the Music Project and 6 at Creative Lives (started February). The total number of sessions delivered from April 2015 - March 2016 is 108 sessions. Overall we have had around 50 people taking part in our groups. We can all be extremely proud that these spaces exist in Ipswich and provide the qualities that they do.

So what of the future? We hope that as an organisation we can become stronger this coming year, the Trustees and I have been looking at how we can organise ourselves a little better and provide even stronger foundations. We have been working with Community Action Suffolk to do this and to identify where we could develop. They have been very helpful and with this help we will have a structure and a plan to work from.



Our new Programme Leader is Allan Williams, a local artist with many links to local people through his work for Voiceability and his work with the NSFT Wellbeing services. We hope that Allan will have a bit of time to get to know people in all the groups, to help us let more people know about who we are and what we are doing, and to ensure that all the existing groups are supported. We welcome Allan and are very happy that he joined us.

What I would like, and need, to do is to meet more of the people in the groups and find out what people are doing, thinking and feeling. I would also like us to spread the invitation to our groups wider, to explore new creative mediums, welcoming artists and participants from all ages and all parts of the world. As always our focus will be on community, on collaboration, on creating spaces where people are met warmly, with compassion, kindness and thoughtfulness, in order to explore art with artists. We are confident in the knowledge that comes from our experiences, and from research from all around the world

and that is, if we can do this we will provide something so precious, so enriching, and so enjoyable that we all prosper.

Have a great year everyone, and I look forward to meeting you.

**Matthew Morris**

**Chair**

