

Year Four Evaluation Summary (2021/2022)

The Library Presents (TLP) brings quality arts activities to Cambridgeshire. The programme is run by Cambridgeshire County Council in partnership with Babylon ARTS and is funded by Arts Council England.

This summary covers the fourth year of delivery. Please note that audience percentage statistics are drawn from the 154 who returned Audience Agency surveys.

Year 4 provided TLP with opportunities to restore 'normal' service following the significant changes required in Year 3. Covid did however remain a very real concern and had a notable impact upon venue capacities, activity logistics and audience confidence.

As trialled in Year 3, a hybrid approach was initially required to exploit the positives that had emerged from remote working (digital & external) and to ensure TLP stayed flexible to changing circumstances. National studies in 2020/21, backed up by TLP's outdoor pilots in the autumn of 2021, revealed that audiences were ready for live content and that the artistic and well-being benefits of in person engagement were clear. Consequently, the 'In Your House' title adopted by TLP in Year 3, was dropped as face-to-face activities became the mainstay of Year 4 content.

As in previous years, the core artistic content was built around two seasons of activity (May to July 2021 and October to December 2021).

The first season featured many acts postponed from the previous year, but for season two the traditional TLP 'Open Call' system and subsequent public menu selection process were reintroduced to choose the participating artists.

The activity in the first season was 'in person' but predominantly outdoors to ensure Covid safety measures could be effectively implemented. Digital content was offered, but significantly less than in Year 3. This was in response to the low engagement levels of local audiences and the feeling of screen fatigue being universally felt.

The majority of locations utilised in Year 4 were outdoors. However, working in libraries is a vitally important aspect of TLP, so as the year unfolded it was necessary to make a return to these spaces. This did however come with challenges. These related to the limited number of people allowed on site, ensuring adequate ventilation and maintaining social distancing; but it was important to keep all involved safe. The result was some drastically reduced audience sizes (History of Jazz at Cambourne was limited to just 10 in the audience), however, feedback was positive and understanding of the situation was universal.

The experience gained by TLP in Year 3 whilst adjusting to function online, outdoors and in alternative venues, proved invaluable to enable the smooth delivery of a comprehensive programme throughout Year 4.

The year saw positive increases in the number of artists programmed, the diversity of those delivering and the level of engagement from Cambridgeshire residents.

CONTENT

PERFORMANCES **50**

WORKSHOPS **30**

COMMISSIONS **6** (listed below)

1. Garlic Theatre performances and workshops with English as an Additional Language communities in Ely and Wisbech (79 engaged).

‘This was the first time many of the children had seen any kind of live arts event.’ (Polish teacher)

2. Huntingdon Community Action Project Commission.

3. Barnwell Verge - Seeds of Hope Commission with Abbey People.

4. Arts Award with young people.
36 ‘Arts Ambassadors’ and 122 ‘Theatre Makers’ achieved awards.

5. Short Films for January - 16 films commissioned for an arts ‘advent calendar’ (estimated engagement of 1,363).

6. Big Read & Write delivered online with 836 Year 5 school children.

Seven digital packages were offered during the core seasons.

Digital mediums provided an opportunity to share innovative work developed by artists, and it was online that TLP delivered some of its most culturally diverse, thought provoking and challenging content. If in future it is determined that digital content does not sit well in the TLP core season framework (with the focus on in-person activities in libraries) it should still remain part of TLP's delivery because of the valuable service and artistic outlet it provides.

The most engaged art forms stayed consistent with the previous three years. Drama and Music remaining high up the list with Storytelling, Puppetry, Magic and Comedy all performing well. Visual Art scored highly in Year 3 due to online content, but this was much reduced due to the return of more in person visual art content (primarily workshops with low capacities).

Families were the highest specific demographic focus group engaged. However, this group did have significantly more activities targeted for them. In Year 3 this had been the over 65s.

ARTISTS

83 ARTISTS AND ARTS ORGANISATIONS SUBMITTED EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR THE CORE PROGRAMME.

43 ARTISTS OR ARTS ORGANISATIONS WERE PROGRAMMED.

20 (43%) OF PROGRAMMED ARTISTS WERE BASED IN THE EAST OF ENGLAND.

12.2% OF THE PROGRAMME WAS DELIVERED BY ARTISTS WITH CULTURALLY DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS.

57% OF ARTS ORGANISATIONS HAD MEMBERS WITH CULTURALLY DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS & OTHER PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS (where information is known).

The percentage of the programme delivered by artist with culturally diverse backgrounds fell from 15% in Year 3 to 12%. This still surpassed the TLP target of 10% and the overall percentage of those with all protected characteristics rose dramatically by 30%. This could be due to more artists sharing this information. In Year 3, 19% of artists preferred not to provide information on their ethnicity and 34% not on their sexuality. Another factor is a more comprehensive gathering of EDI information at the Call Out stage to help TLP create a balanced menu that reflects society.

Despite the percentage of applicants with have a disability being more than in the general population nationally, and despite there being a strong number of applications from LGBTQIA+ or gender non-conforming artists, very few were selected by the public choices. TLP need to address this disproportionate selection.

38 ARTISTS ATTENDED DEVELOPMENT TRAINING ACROSS FIVE WORKSHOPS.

Year 3 = 98 over 3 workshops.

ARTIST FEEDBACK ON WORKING WITH TLP WAS VERY POSITIVE.

'Very easy and creative. Excellent all the way through, great team.' Drumming (Anthony Paul)

'Wonderful as always. It has been a wonderful experience.' Devious Minds

'Communication was professional, friendly and supportive.' Do Not Adjust Your Stage

LOCATIONS

Libraries used	8
Alternative indoor spaces used	9 (including for commission work)
Outdoor spaces used	20
Online activities	8 (several activities had multiple sessions)

ENGAGEMENT & TICKETING

TOTAL ENGAGEMENT FOR YEAR 4 = 5,306 (96.7% Cambridgeshire based).

Year 3 = 13,672 with primarily online engagement.
43% (5,879) estimated as Cambridgeshire based.

Year 2 = 3,536

Year 1 = 2,399

YEAR 4 SAW A RETURN TO ALL CONTENT BEING TICKETED.

All Year 3 content (except for drive in cinema) was free.

It is positive to see the high numbers engaging with ticketed activity. The prevalence of free content in Year 3 carried the risk of making it hard to return to charging.

74% OF ALL TICKETS WERE SOLD

(73% of performances / 76% of workshops)

Capacities for most events were lower. Had activities (especially performances) been running at full capacity, this would equate to a lower total percentage sold. However, it should be noted that in some cases the low capacities led to activities selling out earlier than usual with the sale of additional tickets prohibited. Had activities been running at full capacity more tickets would have been sold overall.

51.7% OF TICKETS WERE SOLD AT STANDARD (FULL PRICE) RATE (Yr 1 = 52.8% / Yr 2 = 40.6%)

59% OF NON-STANDARD PRICE TICKETS WERE CHILD CONCESSIONS (28.6% of total. Similar to Yr 2 = 28.1%)

During the year, audiences were asked about ticket prices (105 answered). The results justify the TLP pricing structure.

89.5% said ticket prices were about right.

10.5% said ticket prices were too cheap.

0% said tickets were too expensive.

ONLY 4 TIME CREDIT TICKETS WERE USED.

This low take up is hard to explain as Tempo give TLP good coverage and support. Customers may be choosing to spend their credits elsewhere on activities of higher monetary value.

In the very early days of TLP, a workshop attendee feedback that '**online booking would be nice**'. At the end of Year 4 we see that this has now become the main route for bookings. Admittedly Covid has played a role in driving this forward but the increasing familiarity with, and convenience of, online booking is undeniable.

Percentage of customers booking tickets online

Year 1 = 45%

Year 2 = 53%

Year 4 = 61%

AUDIENCES

59% OF THOSE WHO SUBMITTED FEEDBACK WERE NEW TO TLP.

Year 3 = 75% (due to online and outdoor working)

Year 2 = 47%

97% WERE MEMBERS OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE LIBRARIES.

THE TOP FOUR AUDIENCE SPECTRUM SEGMENTS ENGAGED WERE THE SAME AS YEARS 2 AND 3:

Dormitory Dependables (27%), Trips & Treats (22%), Home & Heritage (15%), Commuterland Culturebuffs (13%).

AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHIC.

Largest percentage segments for each category:

- 21% are aged 5 – 11 years
- 65% are female
- 70% are white British
- 79% have no disability

More needs to be done to meet the challenge of engaging ethnically diverse and disabled audiences.

47% OF ATTENDEES WERE LOCAL TO THE LIBRARY THEY ATTENDED.

‘Wonderful to have this event in Arbury area - connecting neighbours together!’ (Apple ‘N’ Spice audience quote)

Even though there were more travelling attendees (53%), only 5 (4%) of all the people who provided postcodes came from outside Cambridgeshire. 7 libraries saw an increase in travelling attendees. Only 3 libraries saw a decrease.

‘TLP gets you out to other libraries.’ (Audience quote)

55% of those who travelled to an activity were visiting TLP for the first time. This reflects and justifies the elements of TLP publicity with a county wide reach (e-newsletters, social media, brochures).

Public consultation revealed that the more remote the settlement the more people are prepared to travel to an arts event.

Audiences were asked if they had engaged with TLP previously and returned the following results:

YES, ATTENDED A TLP ACTIVITY BEFORE = 41% (63 people)

NO, THIS IS MY FIRST TIME = 59% (90 people)
Pre Covid = 47%

The figures implies that the longer the programme runs, the more new attendees are drawn to it. This can be attributed to:

- TLP continually striving to programme a variety of diverse content.
- TLP working in new locations (especially outdoors).
- Increased promotion.
- Personal recommendation: On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being extremely likely)
95% of audiences recorded scores of 8, 9 or 10 when asked if they would recommend TLP.

TLP is also nurturing loyal followers.

The average number of TLP activities attended by previous attendees is 4.

‘We’ve been to a couple of TLP shows before and they have never disappointed. This was no different!’ (Audience quote)

97% OF THOSE WHO RETURNED FEEDBACK WERE LIBRARY MEMBERS.

This is the highest this figure has reached (Year 1 = 86%, Year 2 = 81%).

With many community spaces closed and unable to display posters/brochures, and with people tentative about going to unfamiliar venues; these figures reflect how promotion of, and engagement with, TLP in Year 4 stayed closer to home. This strong connection between TLP and library users was reflected by the 26 attendees who stated that ‘Visiting libraries is an important part of who I am’ when giving feedback.

PUBLIC INPUT

The uncertainty surrounding delivery, and the rapid pace at which adjustments to remote working were implemented, meant that TLP’s usual public consultation did not take place in 2020/21. This is a key element of TLP, so it was reassuring to reengage the public with this process for the Autumn 2021 season.

This was carried out using the established system of displaying menus and selection boxes in participating libraries for the public to write down and post their choices. Added to this was the ability to select online and the option for the public to just select their preferred art forms and ages groups.

Whilst the return to public selection was very welcome, it is worrying to see the steady drop in the number of people taking part in this essential part of the process. Measures need to be taken to reverse this trend.

Number of people taking part in public selection:

Autumn 2018 = 221

Spring 2019 = 294

Autumn 2019 = 369

Spring 2020 = 352

Autumn 2021 = 294

Spring 2022 = 285

PUBLIC RESPONSE

Gathering public feedback remained more challenging than in pre Covid times. This was due to: Less in person content, lower venue capacities, public reluctance to feedback digitally and covid deterring the use of paper forms.

THE PROJECT RECEIVED 154 FORMAL AUDIENCE AGENCY SURVEYS. Year 3 = 90

100% RATED ACTIVITIES VERY GOOD (87%) OR GOOD (13%). Year 3 = 93% (87% Very good / 6% Good).

PUBLIC COMMENT SAMPLE (Taken from Audience Agency surveys, emails and social media)

'I think it was the best concert I have ever been to.' (Opera Dudes)

'Amazing opportunity to learn somethings new and try a new skill.' (Fused Glass Workshop)

'Wonderful entertaining and highly skilled performance.' (Gibbon Dance & Juggling)

'Perfectly pitched for all age groups. Food for the soul!' (Hamlet)

'Loved the evening. Loved being outdoors. One of the funniest improv comedies I've seen.' (Do Not Adjust Your Stage)

'Absolutely brilliant, we are so lucky to be able to hear them.' (History of Jazz)

‘The whole thing from start to finish was interactive and a lot of fun!’ (Samba drumming workshop)

‘Absolutely beautiful performance. Inspiring to see these art forms, East meeting West.’ (Apple ‘N’ Spice Dance)

‘A wonderful introduction to physical theatre. Very watchable - we couldn’t take our eyes of it.’ (Storyteller, Storyteller)

‘Wonderful welcome as always. Brilliant atmosphere. Inspiring tuition.’ (Textile Workshop)

‘Feel very fortunate that the event was held and that the cost was so reasonable.’ (Willow Workshop)

‘Fantastic show. Really talented group who had us laughing and clapping the whole time!’ (Graffiti Classics)

Of the 89 comments received from questionnaires, 94% (84) were positive.

As in previous years, negative comments were primarily concerning logistical elements as opposed to artistic content. Unsurprisingly these were issues brought about by having to work outside with unpredictable weather or having to reduce the services on offer to ensure Covid safety.

THE PRIMARY MOTIVATION FOR ATTENDING WAS ‘TO BE ENTERTAINED’ RISING CONSIDERABLY BY 14% TO 69%.

To do something out of the ordinary also rose by 5% as people sought light relief and distraction in uncertain times.

LIBRARY STAFF

There was a significant increase in the number of staff returning surveys (40). Year 3 = 32, Year 2 = 19

Overall, staff view TLP very positively, but their involvement to help promote, support and develop ownership of the scheme needs to be developed. There is less support for activities outside of the library - only 20.5% would be willing to work at events off site, despite how TLP would provide a perfect vehicle for library outreach work.

- **100% OF STAFF WERE AWARE OF TLP WITH 28% PAYING TO ATTEND ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THEIR WORKING HOURS.**
- **86% OF THOSE WHO HAD SEEN ACTIVITIES RATED THEM 'GOOD' (43%) OR 'VERY GOOD' (43%).**
- **82% SAID THAT IT OFFERED A NEW WAY TO ENGAGE THE PUBLIC WITH 38% WISHING FOR MORE ACTIVITIES.**
- **31% OF THOSE ENGAGED WITH TLP SAID IT WAS HARD WORK.**
- **51 STAFF ATTENDED TRAINING.**
25 Unconscious Bias Training, 26 TLP Induction Training.

'Very beneficial. Thank you for the opportunity to attend. This has given me some good tools to go forward with.' (Staff training feedback)

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer involvement is key to successful TLP delivery, especially to support the limited capacity of front-line library staff.

The number of volunteers signing up to be informed of TLP opportunities has risen steadily and at the end of Year 4 stood at 190.

109 of these have actively supported TLP activity at least once over the 4 years.

51 VOLUNTEERS SUPPORTED TLP ACROSS YEAR 4, CONTRIBUTING 170 HOURS.

YEAR 4 SAW THE LARGEST NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS SUPPORTING ONE SEASON – 43 IN SPRING/SUMMER 2021.

In Year4, steps were taken to involve volunteers even more in the programme; where their observations and experiences of TLP over the previous years could prove useful. This was done by inviting 5 volunteers to join the ‘menu-makers’ shortlisting panel for the Autumn 2022 season that convened in March 2022.

The volunteer demographic remains very limited. Average = Over 65, White British, heterosexual with no disabilities. 74 hours (43.5%) were contributed by a core group of 9 particularly active volunteers. This potential over reliance on (and overuse of) key figures is dangerous and highlights the fact that TLP needs to keep recruiting.

MARKETING

The continuing legacy of Covid was a clear drop in the impact of printed material on promotion.

76% HEARD VIA EXTERNAL SOURCES AS OPPOSED TO VISITING A LIBRARY. A drop from Year 3 but an increase on Year 2.

Learning about TLP via the brochure dropped by 16.5% whilst those finding out via the TLP e-newsletter rose by 6%. Word of mouth, had significant influence, increasing by 8.5% as communities reconnected.

The TLP e-newsletter is becoming an increasingly effective marketing tool. It is being more frequently quoted as a way people heard about the programme and data shows a steady growth in subscribers.

TOTAL NUMBER OF NEWSLETTER SIGN-UPS:

2019/2020 = 397

2020/2021 = 1080

2021/2022 = 1807

In Year 4, TLP continued to use Facebook and Instagram as key marketing tools. They were also important for promoting public choosing, sharing artist call outs, celebrate successes and requesting feedback.

The growth rate of Facebook Likes, Facebook Followers and Instagram Followers was less than in previous years, suggesting that TLP social media is maintaining previous visitors more than gaining new audiences. However, maintaining visitors is vitally important.

The monthly average for visits to the TLP website increased and there were 11,000 unique visitors.

Average monthly website views:

Year 1 = 844

Year 2 = 1066

Year 3 = 779

Year 4 = 1193



**Year 4 images. Left to right: Fused Glass (Clay Farm)
Apple 'N' Spice (Arbury), Clay Sculpture (Ely)**



**Year 4 images. Left to right: Samba Drumming
(Haddenham), Graffiti Classics (St Neots)**