



**Stretford Children's Theatre**

**Annual Report**

**2017 / 2018**



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# Our 2017 / 18 year in Numbers

**432** Audience members

**180** Sessional volunteer hours

**166** Classes delivered

**105** Members

**80** - Highest number of children attending over a term in the year

**67** Children paying full rates

**17** Children on Siblings Rate

**8** Voluntary Trustees

**6** paid staff

**4** volunteers

**3** Productions



## Administrative Details

### Contact

Email: [stretfordchildrenstheatre@gmail.com](mailto:stretfordchildrenstheatre@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.stretfordchildrenstheatre.org.uk](http://www.stretfordchildrenstheatre.org.uk)

**REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1175334**

### Registered Address

Stretford Children's Theatre  
Stretford Public Hall  
Chester Road  
Stretford, Manchester  
M32 0LG

Stretford Children's Theatre entered on the Register of Charities on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2017.  
The organisation as it stands today was formed in 2015.

### Bank details

#### Main Account

CAF Bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME194JQ  
CAFCASH Account Number: 00031787  
Sort Code: 40-52-40

Natwest, Trafford Park, Third Avenue, Trafford Park, Manchester, M17 1NW

#### General Account

Name: Stretford Children's Theatre  
Account Number: 56057687  
Sort Code: 01-08-81

#### Savings Account

Name: Stretford Children's Theatre  
Account Number: 56057695  
Sort Code: 01-08-81

**This report is an overview of the activities from Stretford Children's Theatre during the Financial Year ending on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018.**



## About Us

### Our Mission

To inspire, educate and enrich our community by providing high quality accessible performing arts sessions and through public productions.

### Our Vision

To build a valued community organisation that is well-known for its high quality, inclusive, participant-led performing arts offer; an environment where everyone feels valued and supported to unlock talent and reach their potential.

### Our Values

Our values, below, inform our work and guide our attitudes and behaviours:

Values:	Behaviours and attitudes:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creativity</li><li>• Diversity</li><li>• Equality</li><li>• Inclusivity</li><li>• Respect</li><li>• Honesty</li><li>• Aspiration</li><li>• Ambition</li><li>• Collaboration</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Personal responsibility</li><li>• Listening</li><li>• Achievement</li><li>• Confidence</li><li>• Inspiring</li><li>• Nurturing</li><li>• Friendship</li><li>• Support</li><li>• Positivity</li><li>• Fun</li></ul>

### Our Aims

1. To provide fun, creative opportunities
2. To be participant led
3. To increase confidence, resilience and independence for participants
4. To develop social and emotional skills to support mental health and well-being
5. To develop confidence and leadership skills in order to enhance employability
6. To develop skills, knowledge and appreciation of the arts
7. To promote an understanding of the significance of the arts in our shared cultural heritage
8. To encourage participants' connection to their community: a sense of belonging
9. To provide a safe and healthy environment for all
10. To work together with residents, community users, local authorities, voluntary and other organisations to be a positive part of the community
11. To be a robust and sustainable organisation



## Our Story

Stretford Children's Theatre was originally founded in 1945 by Bertram H. Holland and was embedded in the community for more than 35 years. It ceased to exist in the early 1980's, but was re-formed in 2015 by a small group of local people, and takes place at one of its original venues, Stretford Public Hall.

We are a small community group, with a volunteer Board, and drama sessions delivered by professional theatre practitioners, specialists at working with different age groups.

Stretford Children's Theatre, which also includes Stretford Youth Choir, is committed to providing affordable quality drama experiences for local children and young people, aged 4 upwards.

## What we do

We deliver high-quality, accessible and fun drama and choir sessions during term time at Victoria Park Infant School [while Stretford Public Hall is being refurbished]. Our drama classes run on Thursdays at the following times:

- Reception aged children from 4 - 5pm
- Children in Years 1&2 from 5 - 6pm
- Children in Years 3-6 from 6 - 7.30pm
- Children in Years 7-11 from 6 - 7.30pm

And our Choir sessions run Wednesdays from 5 – 6pm for children from Year 2 upwards.

## How we work

We are a registered charity as a foundation CIO, and as such we are governed by our Constitution. A copy of the Constitution which details more information about our group's governance and rules is available upon request, or via our website.

Our registered address is: Stretford Public Hall, Chester Road, Stretford, M32 0LG.

The Trustees of Stretford Children's Theatre are responsible for the strategic management of the charity. The Board of the charity have adopted the Charity Governance Code for smaller charities when becoming a Charity on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2017. This code alongside our Constitution guides the members of the Board on best practice when it comes to governance of Stretford Children's Theatre. Both documents are available on our website.



## Membership and Annual General Meetings

Stretford Children's Theatre is a membership organisation, with all participants being our members. Members pay an annual fee of 5.

Stretford Children's Theatre hosts Annual General Meetings, open to all members. Our AGM looking back at the 2016/17 year was held on **25<sup>th</sup> January 2018** and we will be looking back at the 2017/18 year at our AGM on the **17<sup>th</sup> January 2018**.

## Who we are

### Our Trustees

Ali Duncan	– Chairperson (joined 23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2017)
Annika Edge	– Trustee (joined 8 <sup>th</sup> February 2018)
Janice Rendel	– Trustee (joined 23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2017)
Keith Broom	– Trustee (joined 21 <sup>st</sup> May 2018)
Kirsty Thomas	– Treasurer (joined 23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2017)
Laura Riley	– Secretary (joined 23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2017)
Shelly Quinton-Hulme	– Trustee (joined 23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2017)
Sinead Renold	– Trustee (joined 8 <sup>th</sup> February 2018)

Our Trustees have a 2-4-year term of office, with the earliest renewal date being 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2019. There were no resignations from the Board in 2017/18.

The Board of Trustees is aware that as the charity is growing, strengthening our capabilities is key, and at certain times we may be looking for new Trustees. If you are interested in finding out about becoming a Trustee, please email: [stretfordchildrenstheatre@gmail.com](mailto:stretfordchildrenstheatre@gmail.com) stating who you would like the email to go to.

**Cheque Signatories are:** Kirsty Thomas; Shelly Quinton-Hulme; Janice Rendel and Laura Riley

### Our sessional staff

Tina-Louise Liddle	– Sessional Manager
Alice Penny	– Sessional Worker Infants Drama Group
Jenni Blott	– Sessional Worker Juniors Drama Group
Rosarie Walsh	– Sessional Worker Seniors Drama Group
Caitlin Gleeson	– Sessional Worker Seniors Drama Group
Ella Fontaine	– Sessional Leader Youth Choir



## Our volunteers

Grace Hall	– Infant Drama Group
Debbie Olsen	– Junior Drama Group
Sinead Renold	– Junior Drama Group
Tom Byrne	– Senior Drama Group

## Staying Safe

We have had no serious accidents or incidents this year.

We take safety and security of our team, volunteers, participants and families very seriously. Our public liability insurance is held with Markel Insurance and our certificate for this can be seen on our website. We conduct risk assessments for each group and additional activities to ensure everyone's safety. As part of our work, the Trustees review and amend our safeguarding, health and safety, behavioural and equal opportunities policies, as well as our complaints procedures regularly. All these documents are available on our website.

All our drama practitioners have DBS checks and follow our safeguarding policy. All our policies can be found on our website.

## How you can help

If you are able to support us any further, through donations, volunteering your time or offering specific skills that might be useful, please do get in touch via email at [stretfordchildrenstheatre@gmail.com](mailto:stretfordchildrenstheatre@gmail.com) or get in touch through our Facebook page (Stretford Children's Theatre), or speak to any of the Board Members, volunteers, or session leaders.

In 2017/2018 we have also signed up to Amazon Smile, which allows you to automatically donate a percentage of any amazon orders you place to Stretford Children's Theatre, without any additional cost to yourself. Get in touch for more information.

## What we have achieved in 2017/2018

As you will see from each of the facilitators' accounts within this report, we have done some great things this year which means everyone is working towards fulfilling the aim of making a positive contribution to society to the public benefit of all.

### Our Objectives in 2017/18

Our charitable objectives are:

*To advance education for the public benefit among children and young people aged 4 and above and adults in all aspects of the performing arts by the provision of workshops and opportunities to participate in artistic performances.*

In 2017/18 our specific aims were to:

- increase the levels of creative opportunity in our community;
- provide positive, fun and challenging group activities;
- offer group support in order to increase individual resilience;
- provide exciting and inspiring opportunities for otherwise marginalised individuals and groups to use the arts to explore subjects that matter to them;
- encourage self-development [confidence, independence, informal learning, emotional health and well-being, communication] through participation in a fun and creative experience in a challenging yet safe environment;
- promote an understanding of the significance of the arts in our shared cultural heritage;
- work together with residents, community users, local authorities, voluntary and other organisations to continuously improve the area.

We are pleased to report that we have achieved these aims in the last year and will continue to work hard to continue providing the above opportunities for our local Stretford community.

In addition to our above objectives, highlights of 2017/18 include:

- staging three productions with our young people;
- launching Stretford Youth Choir with support from Trafford Housing Trust;
- growing our membership base;
- building new partnerships with The People's History Museum, Longford Park;
- retaining existing and attracting new professional staff and board members;
- launching our gift aid scheme;
- introducing amazon smile and facebook donations to diversify our income streams;
- successfully bidding for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (bid from the previous year, with activity taking place this year), Comic Relief (via Forever Manchester) and Trafford Housing Trust.

## Chairperson's Annual Report 2017 – 2018

During the year to 31 August 2018, Stretford Children's Theatre has delivered high quality drama sessions to local children and young people between the ages of 4 and 16. The organisation has grown in the year with current membership at 105. In this period we delivered 166 sessions.

As well as delivering weekly term-time sessions, the senior group also created and presented a promenade performance based around the life of John Rylands, supported by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This performance was received well:

*"I really enjoyed today's performance, and was delighted by the production and the way in which we moved around the building and felt a part of the action. The children/young people were amazing and it was nice to see them confident and enjoying their art"* **Audience member for Ahead of his Time**

*"...I feel much more part of our community and of this group"*

*"What surprised me most about this project is how much I've learned – about John Rylands, and about acting"* **Comments from members**

Additionally, we presented two performances (December 2017 and July 2018) to parents, family, friends and interested local people, giving members an opportunity to present to a supportive audience, increasing their confidence and presentation skills.

The weekly drama sessions are facilitated by local professional practitioners, with regular support from local volunteers in a number of roles: as co-facilitators and as voluntary Board membership.

Part way through the year, we also began Stretford Youth Choir, run by a local musician and music teacher: a term-time weekly choir for children aged 7-16 years. Since April 2018, we have delivered 11 sessions and had a membership of 5.

We became a registered charity (number: 1175334) in October 2017 and now have 8 voluntary Trustees, all of whom are Trafford based. Our board members bring a range of skills and experience in theatre, music, finance, education, project management, personnel, producing, production/technical, resource management, fundraising and communications.

We also benefit from support from parents, who enable participants to attend, and also express interest in the sessions and the future of the group. Our last few performances were full to capacity.

During this period, we received income of £28,534 with expenditure of £48,536. With a brought-forward balance of £24,985, we close the year with a balance of £4,983.

As well as delivering sessions and sharing the work with our local community during this period, we also put energy into shoring up our processes and continuing to adjust the format and timing of sessions for efficiency and convenience of stakeholders, developing our policies and procedures, becoming a



registered charity and securing resources for the future. During the year, we have continued to have regular Board and operational planning meetings.

We continue to be based at Victoria Park Infant School, Stretford, whilst our regular home at Stretford Public Hall undergoes essential renovations. We will remain at the school until the renovations are complete, which we expect to be spring 2019.

**We are confident that we have been successful in meeting our principal objective of delivering high quality, affordable drama sessions to local children and young people.** We also know through our own monitoring, plus uptake of discounts as well as implementation of our Financial Support policy that we are supporting children/young people from a diverse range of backgrounds and circumstances, including those who are marginalised, isolated or vulnerable, whether that is evident/visible or not.

Key aims of the group are to provide inspiration, unlock talent and potential, and to help children and young people become confident and improve their physical and mental well-being.

*"It was great to see how much the participants grew in their skills and confidence"*

*"We witnessed many moments of real joy for the young people. It was a big ambitious project – multiform with monologues, duologues, music and movement"* **Facilitator comments**

Going forward, our efforts will be centred on retaining and increasing our membership, especially for Stretford Youth Choir; increasing financial and organisational stability including fundraising especially for the choir, investment in Board training, investigating development of a part-time post and resources for this, and continuing development and implementation of policies and procedures; extending the creative offer for members; increasing visibility amongst existing and potential membership and wider community; improving management and support of volunteers; and investigating a young people's advisory group.

With a committed membership and support from parents, carers, funders and the local community, we will continue to improve Stretford Children's for the benefit of local children and young people.

**Ali Dunican**  
**Trustee/Chair**

## Infant Group Leader's report of 2017/2018

*Storytelling, drama, movement, music & more, all packed into an amazing adventure to explore. Let your imaginations soar!*

In the sessions the children were lead on an imaginary adventure into the world of a theme (we covered Harry Potter & Hogwarts, Wonderland & Outer Space), and out of each adventure a story developed that continued each week. The adventure was facilitated loosely to allow space for the children's ideas to direct the adventure and lead the way.

In each adventure we used various art forms including drama, storytelling, puppetry, the giant parachute, props, costumes, role-play, movement & dance, music. The adventure stimulated each child's imagination and creativity and put into practice all of the skills they learnt & developed in the first half of the session (see below), whilst also encouraging the children to work together and have lots of fun!

Before each adventure there was time dedicated for the children to play games that had an emphasis on warming up the children's bodies to get them ready for the session. We developed their physicality and body expression and encouraged the children to really let go and enjoy their bodies. They also played fun voice games to warm up their voices. We developed the children's confidence of using their voice & speaking in front of others, and developed vocal range & intonation.

In the half term leading to Christmas 2017 we devised a small performance based upon being Circus characters. This then became the opening for the SCT Xmas pantomime, of which the two older groups had devised & performed. The idea being that the children were performing a special show for two of the main characters from the panto - Two princesses, for their birthdays. Our opening was 5 minutes long and entitled 'The silly Circus'. It showcased a colourful array of circus performers - From jugglers, lion tamers, tight rope walkers, elephants to clowns. The children performed a physical, comedic mime, without any speech so really got a feel for using & expressing their whole bodies. It was great to explore this style of performance with such a young group of children.





In the spring 2018 term we started to work on a Summer performance with the older group (year 1&2's), based upon the Outer Space theme that the children had been exploring during their 'adventures'. This included ideas from the children that had been expressed during these sessions, and told the tale of a baby alien falling from outer Space and landing at Victoria Park infant school!

*The alien told the children of a mysterious monster who was eating all of the stars in space, thus making it a very dark place! The children journeyed to outer Space in their 'imaginary' space ship on a mission not only to return the baby alien back to her family who lived on 'Planet Banana', but also to find this strange creature and put an end to its mysterious munching... Along the way they stopped on the moon and met the very grumpy man on the moon who told them he had seen the creature on planet peculiar. Next stop. But just one step onto planet peculiar and all sorts of things happened to the children. They turned into chickens, into sheep, into smelly old socks. They had lots of fun playing there when all of a sudden a tiny little alien stepped onto the planet, and when it did it turned into a monster! 'Hurray' thought the children, we've found the star stealing monster. But when they looked closer it told them:*

*'I'm monster I'm honest and true I just felt sad & lonely And didn't know what to do. I thought if I ate the stars I'd shine so bright! Then I wouldn't feel so sad anymore, I'd be filled with light!'.*

*The children were sorry for making assumptions and learnt that -*

*It's easy to forget when you feel sad, scared or alone  
That inside your heart you're always at home  
Even if you feel as dark as space  
There's always such a bright place  
Inside your heart....*

*It's as big as space'*

*Their journey to space had taught them such a very precious lesson.*

Every child had something to do 'by themselves', which they embraced with such joy & enthusiasm, really taking ownership of their contribution. I think weaving the children's ideas into the show definitely helped too. It was clear that this enjoyment lead to a natural confidence during the performance, which was presented at Victoria Park infant school, in the big hall, at the end of Summer term to a full audience of family members. It was so wonderful to see this confidence shining through, especially as many of them had initially felt very nervous about joining the sessions, perhaps leaving 'grown ups' for the very first time. Equally impressive was the amount of work the children had completed in such a short amount of time (maybe only 4 or 5 weeks to put together the show). They had so many lines to learn, and physical sequences to remember but pulled it off so effortlessly!

**Alice Penny**

## Junior Group Leader's report of 2017/2018

The junior group at Stretford Children's Theatre have completed two shows. Whilst developing many skills within drama the children have also focused on key skills that will benefit them within their lives outside of drama. The children focused on two projects, the first project being a pantomime that the juniors had to work with the other classes to create a Christmas pantomime. And the other project focusing on Shakespeare.

### **Christmas Pantomime**

The children devised parts of a pantomime that was performed for a Christmas show. Within classes we focused on key elements that make a pantomime different to other styles of theatre. The children had great fun especially exploring 'slop scenes', the children had hands on experience of putting a scene together where someone got cream hit in their face. The children also devised scenes with music where they focused on physicality and how to use facial expressions and body language to tell a story to music. Within lessons the group focused on confidence and developing their projection. They needed to work on creating their characters and matching physicality and vocals to their character. This project allowed the juniors to work with the seniors and begin to see how they can develop their skills within drama as they get older. It allowed the children to begin to build a relationship with the older group for when they transition to the next level. The juniors also had to set an example to the infants during rehearsals as they were watching them. This project allowed the children to develop their relationship with the group, discover how to devise a play from scratch and most importantly have fun!!

### **#Shakespeare mash-up**

Within this project the children looked at many Shakespeare plays and began to develop an understanding of this culture. Shakespeare is a fundamental aspect of our English culture. Children don't always look forward to Shakespeare when taught it at school. My theory is Shakespeare was not written to be read it was to be performed, so the best way children will gain an understanding on Shakespeare would be to explore it through play and drama. We held workshops every week focusing on one play. The children would use music, quotes, story boards and their own minds to explore each play. The children would focus on one section and perform it back to peers this allowed the whole group to see a summary of the play in one lesson. Children would also recreate plays with a modern twist. This approach helped the children connect with the play. For Romeo and Juliet, the children explored the themes of love and hate through an idea of two football teams and how the fans reacting with one another. The children created a show using dance and drama to portray their understanding of Shakespeare.

This project was extremely rewarding watching the children grow with confidence and really grasp and enjoy Shakespeare. This will allow them to have gained a fundamental basis of part of their English culture.

**Overall the juniors have had an amazing year, the class is thriving every week and going from strength to strength. The children show so much love for drama and their enthusiasm allows them to explore various topics.**

**Jenni Blott**

## Stretford Youth Theatre Leader's report of 2017/2018

In 2017/18 the youth theatre group focused on a project around local heritage. With funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund Young Roots scheme and with support from our partners the People's History Museum and Stretford Public Hall, Stretford Children's Theatre has been proud to work with 14 local young people, aged 11-15, on a project that explored the history of John Rylands, Manchester's first multi-millionaire, and his role as a social investor in Stretford (for more information on the performances see 'Productions').

The project took place between February and July 2018 and included:

- Visits to the People's History Museum, John Rylands Library and Quarry Bank Mill
- A talk by the Friends of Longford Park, giving context of when John Rylands lived at the hall
- An object-handling and creative session led by the People's History Museum
- 15 three-hour Thursday evening workshops led by practitioners of drama, music and writing, developing team-work, collaborative skills, confidence
- Working with these practitioners to devise and perform an hour-long promenade performance, including devising drama, writing and performing monologues and creating new songs and raps
- 'Taking over' Stretford Public Hall for a week to rehearse and then present the promenade performance to a total audience of over 150 people
- Earning their bronze-level Arts Award (through actively participating in any art form, being an audience member for an arts event, researching the career and work of an artist/craftsperson that inspires them, passing on an arts skill)
- Devising and leading games and activities at the end-of-project Celebration Event
- Developed a better idea of their local area of Stretford as a community, and its history
- Created zines to show and share that understanding

The regular weekly Thursday evening sessions were led by a combination of the drama facilitator and assistant drama facilitator, one of the heritage support officers, a writer and a musician. One session also featured a museum-arranged object handling activity. Session leaders also reported on something that surprised or excited a young person. Answers included facts around John Ryland's life as well as their own working practice and creation processes.

**In addition to the activities above, by the end of the project, the young people had:**

- Formed new friendships
- Developed teamwork and collaboration skills
- Developed confidence
- Developed positive relationships with the range of adults working with them on the project
- Developed and led games and activities with the group and with adults and other children/young people at the Celebration Event in June 2018

- Gained a greater understanding of the history of John Rylands
- Developed a better idea of their local area of Stretford as a community, including learning some of its history
- Created zines to show and share that understanding
- Written individual monologues which they performed during the promenade performance
- Written and performed new songs (plus, in one young person's case, a rap)
- Had a lot of fun!

It's fair to say that the young people have really benefited from being involved in the project, in terms of personal and social skills, in developing their understanding of local history and in devising a complete performance including words, music and acting.

During the project, session leaders fill in a short evaluation after each workshop. Of these responses, workshop leaders reported the young people's engagement on a scale from 1 to 10. More than half the sessions (61.6%) were rated highly (8-7), with the lowest rating being 5 at 7.7% of the sessions.

**The team met towards the end of the project to discuss the outcomes of the project.**



The most **memorable aspects** of the projects were the positive, including seeing the young people developing confidence, focus and enthusiasm as they got more into it. They became keen to share their ideas. Further, it was positive seeing them develop friendships and trust with each other and seeing the young people challenged by this project – which the team felt was very much in the spirit of the original Stretford Children's Theatre.

The team also noticed **positive changes** in the young people, such as an increase in confidence, skill level and engagement as well as some young people showing a growing sense of understanding of the value of the project and consequently wanting to share their ideas.

Overall, the team felt that having a **bigger team** made it much easier to achieve things with a group whose attitudes and behaviour can be challenging at times. It helped to be able to break the group into smaller focused sub-groups for some focused activities. Further, including **Arts Award** was perceived a positive part of the project, leading to young people devising and leading their own activities and improving their skills. Regular team meetings to find out what others were doing and what they need was very helpful.

**Rosarie Walsh**

## Stretford Youth Choir Leader's report of 2017/2018

Stretford Youth Choir was set up to provide high quality singing tuition and performance opportunities to young people in Stretford. In the first term we sang songs from a variety of genres including classical, pop and musical theatre.

The children learned about tempo, volume, how to breathe well for singing and put their new skills into practice at an end of term performance for parents and family. Parents and audience members were impressed at the quality of singing. An evaluation session following the performance allowed choir members to discuss what they thought went well/ not so well about it, and set goals for the next performance, such as 'sing with more expression', and 'don't be as nervous'.

A growing body of evidence supports singing as an activity that releases tension and stress, and the positive mood in rehearsals is testament to this. The children have made friends with like minded individuals and enjoyed the camaraderie of singing as a group. Children have been learning songs from the sing up bank of resources, and at the Associated Board of Music and Trinity College London, Grades 1-2 level. Developing their musicianship skills alongside performance skills. The sessions are focussed, fun and upbeat and include music based games at the end as a cool down.

A clear improvement in singing technique has been noted in just one term. The overall sound of this choir has an improved tone, increased projection and importantly intonation (singing in tune) has drastically improved. We pride ourselves on bring an inclusive and diverse choir and hope to attract more singers to us next year to benefit, with a full Christmas schedule of performances lined up. Numbers have increased almost 3 fold from just three at the first rehearsal to 8-10 regular members and we would like to double this figure by the end of the 2019 term.

**Ella Fontaine**



## Productions & Performances

### Panto 2017 - The Knights of the Royal Petals

This was Stretford Children's Theatres first devised pantomime. It was a collaborative performance between the 4 drama groups with over 40 young people aged 4-14. The performance was based on the mix of old fashioned fairytales with a modern day twist.

"A celebration is in place to mark the triplets' princesses birthday. However, evil is always around the corner, the princesses have been kidnapped, who can help? From the far corners of the Kingdom Knights come to take part in a quest to rescue the princess. But these princess are a lot braver and smarter than we know and succeed in rescuing themselves"

This performance took place at Victoria Park Infants school and had over 120 parents, siblings, friends and volunteers to watch.



### Summer Performances 2018

On 11<sup>th</sup> July 2018 our Youth Choir had its first performance, followed by the Children's Theatre groups' performances on the 12<sup>th</sup> July. Overall we welcomed 146 audience members to the shows. It was a fantastic way to end the year and for the children to show what they had learnt over the past months.



# Ahead of His Time: John Rylands

## Ahead of His Time: John Rylands



Between February and July 2018, Stretford Children's Theatre has been proud to work on a project that explored the history of John Rylands, Manchester's first multi-millionaire, and his role as a social investor in Stretford. The project was supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund Young Roots scheme, the People's History Museum and Stretford Public Hall.

### THE PROJECT IN NUMBERS

<b>17</b> Local young people involved	<b>6</b> 1-hour promenade performances	<b>158</b> Audience members
<b>12</b> staff:	<b>1</b> Project co-ordinator <b>2</b> heritage support officers <b>1</b> Musician <b>1</b> Writer	
<b>1</b> Supporting artist <b>1</b> Photographer & videographer <b>5</b> Volunteers		

The project brought together the young people's historical learning and drama skills at Stretford Public Hall. The performances used different parts of the space to bring different parts of John Rylands' life and connection with Stretford to life, immersing the audience. One of the performances was attended by the **Mayor and Mayoress of Trafford** and another by staff from our heritage partner, the **People's History Museum**.

*"As mayor and mayoress of Trafford, and Stretford local councillors, we're very proud today."*

We started the project with 8 participants but as the project progressed, more young people joined, bringing the numbers of those involved to 17, **doubling the size of the original group**. Most young people wanted to participate because they enjoyed drama, which the group initially came together for, and several also mentioned that it sounded "**fun and interesting**". At the start of the project the participants only had a **middling sense of positivity about where they live** (average 5.2 out of 10) and fairly **low interest in learning more about it** (average 4.6 out of 10). At the end of the project, many participants highlighted the historical learning as a highlight.

Alongside learning more about the local history, the project excited the young people in different ways. These are some of the things that young people said about the project:

*"It's been good to make new friends, so I know I have people outside of school to meet up with"*

*"I'm looking forward to the costumes, trying them on and the thrill of performing"*

*"I'm looking forward to performing with all my new friends and in front of lots of people"*

*"I'm looking forward to showing off my talents to everyone"*

*"What's surprised me most is that I actually really enjoyed it even though I don't like history in school."*

*"What's surprised me is how much more I feel part of a community and part of this group."*

*"What's surprised me most is how much I've learnt - about John Rylands and about acting as well."*



Through the project we made **good connections with our local communities**. Half of our audience were from the immediate local area, with 4 out of 5 audience members being from Stretford or its immediate neighbour towns. 94% of the audience were from Greater Manchester, with others travelling from Liverpool, Birkenhead and north Cheshire.

Over one third of our audiences did not know the performers, showing that the local community wants to engage with our work. These people said they either liked to support community events, the organisation or the Public Hall venue or had seen advertising and wondered what the event was. Just over 50% of the audiences were family of the performers and 25% were friends. **We hope that this local engagement is positive for future awareness of both Stretford Children's Theatre and Stretford Public Hall.**

Audience members rated their enjoyment of the performance very highly with a total of 9.6 out of 10, with no significant variance between whether the audience members knew the young people. Many felt **they had learnt about John Rylands** and the history of Stretford, admired the **talent and hard work** of the young people involved and enjoyed moving around and connecting with Stretford Public Hall, a local community resource with over a century of history. Further positive comments included that the performance was both **educational and entertaining** and noticing the **positive partnership** between the young people and the adult staff and volunteers.

*"I was surprised by the enthusiasm and ability of the performers. I knew it would be good but it was better than that!"*

*"The imaginative way they unfolded the story and led us around the building. What a great way to bring history alive."*

*"I cannot believe all the effort that went into that. It was amazing."*

*"It was great to see local children involved in local history and understanding about where they live."*

*"The kids were fantastic, the acting was amazing, the singing was good."*

*"I really enjoyed the enthusiasm and hard work of all concerned"*

*"I really enjoyed the creativity of the performance and dedication of the young people to their roles"*

Session leaders also reported positively on what the workshops meant to them:

*I think it showed me that the young people have such amazing ideas and I'm excited about the performance. It was especially nice to see one young person so excited about an idea he instantly had to go and find a piece of paper to write it down on*

*I really feel like the group now properly care for the project and like it belongs to them, as they seem to be coming up with ideas that they desperately want to share left right and centre*

*Great to see how much the participants are growing in their skills and confidence - very encouraging*

Facilitators also felt it was a good challenge to work on an ambitious project, helpful in developing their flexibility and ability to think on my feet and thought it was great to work within their local community and a group of different artists. **While there were challenges, the team very much felt that they were, on the whole, outweighed by the many positives of the project.**





## Treasurers Report and Annual Accounts - 2017/2018

This financial year saw a lot of positive changes for the financial section of the group.

At the beginning of the financial year we had only a retrospective view on our current financial position which didn't give us the ability to act quickly should the account require it. We knew this left us in a vulnerable position financially and agreed to open a new bank account that provides us with online banking facilities (CAF bank). This account allows us instant and remote access to view and act upon the information given should we need to; all Board members have been given a login which increases visibility of our funds. During December 2018 we moved all funds from the Natwest bank account into the CAF account (bank statement balance as at Dec 2018 £8,039.45).

At the inception of the group it was always our intention for Stretford Children's Theatre to be a cash free group. Using cash increases risk to the charity and those carrying it. For this reason we began to use Go Cardless to collect the membership and subscription fees, this method has been well received by the group and parents alike due to its convenience. We also have a card reader (iZettle) onsite for any other payments. This money is deposited straight into the charity bank account. Fees are now regulated across the year from £3.00 per session to £12 per month with £1.00 taken for August and £5.00 for sibling rates.

During 2018 the Board proposed and agreed a Financial Support Policy whereby subs would be reduced by 50% (£6 per individual, £2.50 siblings) on a pre-arranged basis. Should you require further information about our Financial Support Policy please make either your group leader or sessional leader aware.

2017/18 saw a lot of change within the financials for SCT and our hope for 2018/19 would be to let these changes 'bed in' and become normal practice for all stakeholders of the group.

### Grants

A lot of the income and expenditure from 2017/18 came from grants and was spent in accordance with the grant agreements.

Grants received by Stretford Children's Theatre in 2017/18;

- £14,500 – Heritage Lottery Fund for Rosarie Walsh's Ahead of His Time project for our senior group. This is now fully closed out.



- £4,560 – Comic Relief grant, administered by Forever Manchester – for developing the board and core running costs. This is due to be closed out in April 2019.
- £1,735 – Trafford Housing Trust for the setup and running costs of Stretford Youth Choir for 11 weeks. This is now fully closed out

## **Gift Aid**

In July 2018 SCT prepared their Gift Aid claim for the period November 2017 until July 2018 which was paid to us in October 2018 – a welcome £2,573 funds into the group. Gift Aid is a UK tax incentive that enables tax-effective giving by individuals to charities in the United Kingdom.

We are only able to claim Gift Aid from the point where SCT was recognised as a charity by HMRC, this was completed in November 2017. We will make our claim once a year during August to ensure funds at the beginning of each financial year (SCT's financial year runs from September to August, in line with the academic year).

## **Reserves**

These are calculated as follows;

Amounts of unprotected cash available divided by the sum of monthly running costs – which gives us the number of months we are able to operate should no further income be forthcoming.

Based on the above information our monthly running costs are £1,429.25.

<u>Expenditure Item</u>	<u>Projected cost Per Annum</u>
Hall Hire	£ 2,850.00
Session Leaders	
Infants	£ 3,800.00
Juniors	£ 2,850.00
Seniors	£ 2,850.00
Sessional Manager	£ 1,140.00
Insurance	£ 270.00
Administration	£ 100.00
Website Hosting	£ 71.00
OSM/Go Cardless	£ 250.00
Bank Charges	£ 60.00
Choir – Hall Hire	£ 570.00
Choir - Session Leader	£ 770.00
Choir – Sessional Manager	£ 570.00
Storage unit hire	£ 1000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 17,151.00</b>

In 2019 we will determine how many months' reserves we need to retain for business continuity purposes and as a matter of urgency we will ring-fence these funds in the SCT savings account.

**Kirsty Thomas**  
**Trustee / Treasurer**



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/  
members of

Charity name

Stretford Children's Theatre

On accounts for the year  
ended

Charity no  
(if any)

Set out on pages

Remember to include the same numbers of additional boxes

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 December 2017.

Responsibilities and  
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent  
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below \*) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:

Date:

11/12/2018

Name:

ITA KIRBYNE

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):

Address:

202 Park Rd  
Manchester  
M32 8RB



## Our future

### Our aims for 2018-19 are as follows:

1. Retain existing and increase membership in line with resources
2. Increase financial and organisational stability via:
  - a. Increased earned income from membership/session fees
  - b. Increased income from grants/philanthropic sources
  - c. Recruit of a part-time dedicated post (subject to funding)
  - d. Investment in people – training for Board; CPD/inspiration for session facilitators
  - e. Improved governance – training for Board; development and review of key policies/procedures; attract new Board members with time and skills;
  - f. Improved governance - develop Risk Review and Management Plan
3. Extend the creative offer and provide inspiration for existing members by: providing new art-form experiences/sessions with sessional facilitators with differing skills; bringing in performers/directors/writers etc; by attending professional/other productions together
4. Building up to larger-scale productions with increased resources; delivered more effectively
5. Increase visibility amongst potential members and wider local community through improved communications
6. Increase number of, and management and support of volunteers
7. In the longer term, involve young people in running of Stretford Children's Theatre: invite relevant alumni to Board; set up existing members' young people's advisory group
8. Investigate post-16 provision; and adult provision
9. Investigate summer school provision

## Thank you!

We would like to thank:

**Our Funders:** Heritage Lottery Fund for supporting 'Ahead of his time', NCS for the digital camera, Trafford Housing Trust for supporting setting up our Youth Choir

**The Team:** All our facilitators, staff and volunteers for their hard work, passion and smiles

**Our Children, Young People and Parents.**

# STRETFORD CHILDREN'S THEATRE

2017 / 2018

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED



**105**

Members

## OUR SESSIONS



**166**

Sessions delivered

**180**

Volunteer hours

## OUR PRODUCTIONS



**3**

Productions

**432**

Audience members

## OUR STAFF



**6**

paid staff

**4**

volunteers

**8**

trustees

## GETTING SOCIAL



**166**

Twitter followers

**214**

Facebook friends

## FINANCES



**£28,5k**

Total income

**73% 27%**

From grants Earned income