



# A Dance A Day – over 50's dance project

Activate Performing Arts, Dorset

---

## Project Overview

### Why the activity was needed

25% of Dorset's population are 65+; the national average is 16%. There is a sharp decrease in physical activity in the over 65's; over 55's from Weymouth & Portland and Christchurch are most at risk from inactivity and its associated co-morbidities. Physical inactivity and social isolation are significant risk factors for many physical and psychological conditions. Many of the older population of Dorset face these issues and resulting health inequalities. Lower socio-economic groups are often particularly under-active.

The Dorset Joint Strategic Needs Analysis, the Department of Health and the World Health Organisation all promote the importance of regular physical activity in preventing life-limiting illnesses and reducing pressure on health services. This is particularly important in a county with an increasing number of older residents.

### Description of activity

A Dance A Day is a community dance project for the over 50s in Dorset, supporting older people to actively and creatively age. In weekly classes participants work with experienced dance artists to develop movement skills, improvisation and choreography. They also develop dance based exercises to be incorporated into daily routine, thus increasing regular activity levels.

This Inspire Marked project was initially created for the Cultural Olympiad with all 5 groups performing in Weymouth during the London 2012 Sailing Events, highlighting the desire of older people to continue to set themselves challenges and achieve their own personal bests.

Four groups are continuing and focusing on new goals.

### Partners and Funders

Communities for Health programme, Island Community Action, Weymouth and Portland Partnership, Purbeck Community Partnership, Bournemouth Borough Council, Pavilion Dance South West, Christchurch Community Partnership, West Dorset Partnership, West Dorset District Council, Arts Council England, Santander Foundation, Dorset Community Foundation, Dorset County Council.

---

## Project Outcome

A Dance A Day has successfully used dance to increase health and wellbeing for Dorset residents, has highlighted the creativity and contribution of the older community and has been useful in advocating for the use of dance to support health priorities.



# A Dance A Day – over 50's dance project

Activate Performing Arts, Dorset

5 A Dance A Day groups created in Bournemouth, Wareham, Christchurch, West Dorset and Portland.

Total Number of participants in Year 1 - 193

Total classes attended - 1491

Total audience- 1200+

Impact has been increased through the opportunity to participate in social activity, with numerous testimonies such as those below to illustrate improved health and mental well-being.

“Dance gives the individual confidence to cope with everyday life. It enhances fitness and wellbeing, using a medium that is fun, progressive and creative without the competitive pressure to reach unreachable targets. As a retired Chartered Physiotherapist I highly commend this project.”

Judith Wheeldon, Wareham A Dance A Day

“Each time after ‘A Dance a Day’ session, I experience a greater sense of well-being, self-worth and confidence. I have a more positive outlook on life, believing that dancing can keep me supple and strong in old age. What a joy to be part of the greater picture and to have the opportunity of making new friends.”

Monique Newby

“At the beginning of the project, my blood pressure was very high. I recently had it checked again and it has lowered considerably – I definitely put this down to dancing and everything it does for me.”

Margie Barbour

The continuation of the project into this year has been widely supported by many partners, participants and funders and we look forward to increased growth.

---

## Contact details for further information

Name: Rosalind Conlon

Organisation: Activate Performing Arts

E-mail: [rosalind@activateperformingarts.org.uk](mailto:rosalind@activateperformingarts.org.uk)



Photographer John Dukes