



Company: **The Electric Sunshine Project* cic (TESP)**
Registered Address: 3 Rawcliffe St, Blackpool, FY41BX
Lead Contact: **Melanie Whitehead**, Artistic Director
Company No: 10286868



Location of Premises: The Old Electric, Springfield Rd, Blackpool, FY11QW
Website: www.theoldelectric.co.uk
Telephone: 01253 834 175

Our Aims: To offer regular & accessible **Open Access events**, projects. & courses for adults, young people & children that provide entry points to their own creativity.
Partnerships; to work in collaboration with other organisations & service-providers to develop arts-based projects which can achieve specific positive social cohesion, educational, health & well-being outcomes for targeted communities.
New Work development; we will always use performance to share stories & cast positive light on the area, engage new audiences, create professional development opportunities which result in viable professional pathways, & with the ultimate aim of becoming the town's first producing theatre for new, socially-engaged, work for the stage.

Our Mission: TESP offers creative experiences; workshops, events, projects & shows, & in The Old Electric a new meeting place for communities. We aim to reduce barriers for children, families & adults in the Blackpool & Fylde coast areas to connect with their own creativity. We encourage people to think, develop skills & grow in confidence while having fun. With profits being reinvested into the local community, we are the only socially engaged theatre who use the arts as a transformative process to positively change the town.

Blackpool Context: Blackpool attracts around 18-million visitors each year: Its popularity as working-class family holiday destination is core to the town's existence. However, a combination of factors has resulted in a resident population of 140,000 with little sense of its own community, lower than average aspirations and attainments, and higher than average rates of crime and deprivation. According to 2019 Multiple Indices of Deprivation Scale **Blackpool wards make up 8/10 of the worst affected areas in England.**

Company Context: Established in 2016 by Melanie, following street and desk-based market research. TESP is now supported by a board of five directors who meet quarterly, operational planning is informed by regular community consultation events and participant feedback processes. Our experiences in Blackpool determined our prioritising the need for a creative community-led hub in the town centre; an accessible space with a diverse programme. In August 2020, we received our first instalment of **Lottery Reaching Communities** support of **£233,500 over 3-years** and opened our new venue **The Old Electric**; a key asset in our ability to diversify income streams, solidify brand values & ultimately engage with more people. The derelict nightclub on the promenade (originally built as a cinema) is fully DDA compliant and consists of the following spaces:

- The Mezz including an administrative hub with shared desk space for other organisations, storage, a bookable meeting space and intimate workshop/scratch space
- The Theatre - a large 200-seater amphitheatre style performance and workshop space
- The Gallery - linked to the theatre - a cafe/workshop space
- Smaller areas including a Woodworking Workshop and Sound-proofed Booth

In our first years' operation at TheOE (Aug 20-July 21), in spite of the pandemic and lockdown restrictions we ran over **700 unique sessions**, connected with **3661 participants**, performed **19 shows** for **approx 4000 audiences** and worked with **48 unique artists** - in person and online.

We currently employ 1 full-time staff member, 1 Kickstart role, 1 part-time cleaner and a pool of 12 volunteers who fulfil a variety of roles around the building. In our first year we were also able to engage the regular services of over 35 local contractors for buildings works, H+S consultancy, refuse + sanitary arrangements, book-keeping + accounting, IT, web, marketing and printing fulfilment plus over 30 paid freelance creative roles.

Other organisations have started to use the spaces regularly and make TheOE a genuine creative community hub in the heart of Blackpool. As a result of this, we have started partnership conversations with a broad range of organisations who we hope will develop the next steps for the venue in the future. These include: House of Wingz, Inspira, Fulfilling Lives Lived Experience Team, Boing Boing + Headstart, Think Forward, Aunty Social, Showtown, LeftCoast, Lightpool, Blackpool Libraries Service, Blackpool Arts Service, Blackpool Public Health, Homotopia, Alex Ferguson Productions, Sam Bradshaw Productions, WEA, Arts Award, Lancashire Refugee Resettlement Team, Red Rose Recovery, Blackpool Football Club Community Trust, UCLAN, Blackpool + Fylde College, Urban Organic, Arts Council England, Curious Minds, Sam's Place, Armfield Academy, Claremont Plan, The Magic Club, Tramshed, Theatre Centre.

Through Lottery funding and support from organisations including Blackpool Council, Lancashire County Council, European Social Fund and Warburtons as well as income gained through space hire, ticket sales and small amounts via merchandise and cafe sales, our

20-21 Financial overview is:

Total Income: £124,687

Total Expenditure: £117,11

We want to ensure the venue has the greatest possibility of success past this initial 3-years of Lottery funding; to help us move beyond a project-by-project approach towards long-term financial competence and towards greater security of creative practice for our local residents. As Melanie is the sole full-time employee; Year 2 is about **capacity building**.

We need help to see how all aspects of TheOE can be an opportunity to effect step-change in creative programme delivery in Blackpool; we hope to positively influence the town's current economical seasonal model, promote new leadership opportunities, support more ambitious ideas for collaborations and increase confidence in the local population.

Covid Recovery funding, enabled us to contract **a specialist to reimagine the refreshment offer**. It is anticipated their report will be **complete by the end of Nov** and will inform our future planning in relation to income diversification.

We have been awarded £10,000 from Backstage Trust for approximately 30-days of support over 12-months.

We are therefore seeking to appoint a consultant:

To review the operational needs of the venue and to align community-building potential with creative commercial possibilities.

It is anticipated this person will use their **knowledge, experience** and **new research** to develop a clear and implementable plan, which may include proposals relating to **ticket income, diversification of space use, audience development, membership and patronage plans, corporate sponsorship possibilities**. It is also expected that, as part of this contract, the role will conduct some **specific fundraising activity including submitting grant applications** that grow the company and its financial stability and which can potentially sustain a future ongoing fee if appropriate.

Beyond initial orientation, the ideal person for this role will be independent and **self-managing**. It is therefore necessary for them to have an established **experience of the UK arts industry** (ideally with a working knowledge of subsidised theatre), a **connection to community/participatory activity** and **knowledge of the Blackpool landscape**.

A clear relationship to **business planning** and a proven track record in **developing successful funding applications** (over £1million) would be advantageous. This person will be **administrative** and **people-orientated** with an excellent **attention to detail** and a **demonstrative understanding of how communities can be empowered through creativity**.

We are currently considering submitting an application to become an **Arts Council NPO** in 2022, this consultative investment, direct outcomes and any recommended steps should feed directly into this ACE application.

This role can be completed in the most appropriate way for the right candidate eg 1-day-a-week or a single intensive month or something in between. However, all work needs to be **completed in full by 1 August 2022**. The fee of £10k includes all administrative, travel and accommodation costs incurred and will be paid in 2 equal instalments. It is expected that a full report will be submitted prior to the final invoice which includes clear, practical and actionable recommendations based on our current operational capacity and any suggested additional resources needed should come with a plan for achievement.

If you are interested, please submit an Expression of Interest to Melanie Whitehead via email at electricssunshineproject@gmail.com By 9am Monday 15 November.
If you would like to talk about the role in advance please call on 07940502450.

* In 1879, Blackpool became the first municipality in the world to have electric street lighting - they called it 'Electric Sunshine'. We are inspired by this ambition and seek to influence a new narrative about Britain's best loved seaside town through innovative attitudes to arts.