



## **ARTS & HEALTH SOUTH WEST PRIZE 2015 SHORTLISTED CASE STUDY**



**Name of organisation:**  
Shallal

**Title of project/programme:**  
Shallal 2013/2014

**Dates of project/programme:**  
2013/2014

**Summary:**

For over 20 years Shallal has championed inclusive arts for all people, whatever age, background or ability. Shallal is a small inclusive, intergenerational Penzance based charity providing opportunities in dance, movement, theatre and related arts for a range of participants, including people with Down's syndrome, Alzheimer's, autism, mental health issues, chronic fatigue, physical disability, and those suffering from disadvantage and social exclusion and isolation. Our company members are from across Cornwall and aged between 15 to 83 years.

Our work uses dance and creativity as a means to address issues relating to health, wellbeing and social isolation that affect many of our members. Devised and led by its members, projects tackle barriers to inclusion through supporting people to have a voice, to value and share their talents. Shallal celebrates diversity, ability and community.

2014 was an incredible year of growth and creativity for Shallal. Our projects matured into confident performance collectives; for example Friends and Dancing and Shallal 2. Shallal brought diversity and inclusion to community events in Cornwall such as Remapping St Ives and Walkabout West Cornwall App.

Alongside these new projects the core company's main areas continued to provide the bedrock to Shallal;

1. Community Outreach programme offering regular dance/movement/theatre workshops in a variety of locations in Cornwall currently Redruth, Helston and Falmouth.

2. Shallal's flagship main Performing Company meeting one day a week. Participants from the outreach programme progress to showcase their creative talents.

3. Shallal Studios which offers visual arts workshops and platform for exhibitions.

**Overview:**

Shallal's mission is to address the following needs within our community using creative, inclusive approaches and interventions;

1. Increase health benefits and life chances

In 2008, it was estimated that there were about 7,700 people in Cornwall with a learning disability and it is believed that this figure increases yearly whilst services for Adult Social Care continue to be cut. Spending on adult care in England has fallen by 7.5% since 2011-14.

The Health Equity Audit carried out a study that identified high levels of obesity and associated co-morbidity of adults with a learning disability. People with a learning disability are 10 times more likely to die at a young age, have high risk of heart disease and diabetes, mainly due to lack of opportunity to access exercise, lack of community provision, poor diet and social isolation.

In carrying out health checks for adults with disabilities it was discovered that people wanted to exercise but lacked the confidence to use the gym, could not follow complex exercise regimes or routines, felt ostracized in mainstream classes and sessions were not in an accessible format.

Our projects aim to meet the needs of people by empowering them to feel safe to move and engage with other people without the fear of "getting it wrong". Our projects also play a vital role within our community in providing provision where services are limited and at times, not available.

2. Break down isolation

Cornwall is a large, isolated county where people have to travel great distances to get to places. Transport links are very poor and not interlinked. Poverty in Cornwall is linked to rural isolation. According to the Cornwall & Isles of Scilly LEP at least 80% of Cornwall's population live in rural settlements that compares to 19% across England (DEFRA 2010).

This affects all people but in particular older residents and those who are disabled / vulnerable can become easily isolated at home which will then have a knock on effect on their physical and mental health.

Our projects aim to create enjoyable, regular opportunities where different people's needs are taken into consideration and supported. The sessions provide an important link within the wider community as well as getting people together, whatever age, background or ability, in a fun setting whilst building self-esteem and self-confidence through participation.

3. Increase opportunities for people who are disabled and/or are vulnerable through learning new skills, signposting and linking back into the wider community.

In 2012 a study placed Cornwall in the worst 5% areas in the UK to be at 'risk of poverty'. Shallal is based in Penzance, postcode TR18 4BU, which ranks in the bottom 10% (Office for National Statistics' Indices of Multiple Deprivation).

Our projects provide exciting, high quality, sometimes challenging and experimental life chances to push the boundaries of opportunities for people with disabilities. Through regular consultation with our beneficiaries and partners, we provide projects and workshops that are led by our members and we respond according to those needs. We are well embedded within our Cornish community so we are able to signpost and support people beyond the workshops we provide. Our celebratory performances link with existing venues and events to maximise audiences and raising of profile.

### **Our innovative 2014 Projects and Outputs:**

**Shallal Main Company** – Shallal's flagship. Workshops culminated in performances and outreach shows/exhibitions. Based in Newlyn, members from all over Cornwall.

**Open House** - Inclusive dance and theatre workshops for people with severe learning and physical disabilities. Pathway into main company. Based in Helston and Redruth due to easy access for participants in Day Care Centres.

**Shallal 2** - Sessions developed out of local demand in Falmouth area.

**Friends and Dancing** - Originally a Healthy Living Group, they enjoyed dance so much they came up with their name and performed for friends.

**Remapping St Ives** - Designed to highlight the difficulties that people with mobility issues have in accessing the town, as well as celebrating the places, people and organisations that support those with limited mobility who wish to enjoy St Ives. Performed during St. Ives September festival week.

**Aiming High** - Sessions with children with high needs and life limiting conditions, held at Special Schools.

**Moving Words** - innovative project exploring poetry, literature, performance and film through written, spoken and signed language with a wide range of young people with different abilities under 19 years of age.

**Walkabout West Cornwall App** - Commissioned by Penlee House Gallery and Museum and working in partnership with awen productions CIC, Shallal created dance pieces in response to artifacts accessed via the app. Performed at Penlee Gallery during 'Take Over' day, Arts Council initiative.

**Shallal Studios** - visual arts workshops and platforms for exhibitions.

**Wardrobe project** - participants create dance costumes for their performances.

Artforms include dance, movement, theatre, visual arts, film, poetry – this list grows to reflect our beneficiaries' interests.

Shallal has a highly experienced core team, Trustees and pool of skilled visiting artists that support the company's vision. All Shallal facilitators are committed to a process of regular and ongoing peer supervision to ensure best practice is maintained.

**Jo Willis** - Artistic director, highly trained dance facilitator. Over 30 years' experience teaching dance/movement, particularly within hospital, day care centres, occupational therapy and community settings.

**Colin Curbishley** - workshop leader, stage management, travel co-ordinator, production team and Shallal Studio support artist. Colin also runs Tea Dances with a difference.

**Debbie O'Nyons** - poet/writer, performer and facilitator with an empathic and empowering ability to communicate and work alongside disadvantaged people.

**Jo Lumber** - Shallal practitioner writer/performer with Theatre Writing BA Hons and Professional Writing Post Graduate Diploma. Jo has worked as a learning officer and workshop facilitator in museum and galleries.

**Barbara Santi (awen productions CIC)** – empowers communities through participatory film-making. Barbara also supports Shallal in strategic development and bid writing.

**Lou Brett** - works as part of Shallal Studios as an artist mentor as well as delivering project management, arts administration, PR and bid-writing for a range of arts organisations including Shallal.

### **Innovation:**

The inclusive methods Shallal uses are innovative in encouraging and enabling people with a disability to participate more fully in society. Our work adds value to existing provision by being led by its members, providing exciting, original opportunities for those who need extra support in life. There is no other organisation in Cornwall that develops skills and provides fresh opportunities in this way for vulnerable people.

E.g; Kerry Jackson has cerebral palsy. When joining Shallal's Open House in 2007 her range of movement was severely limited. Within a short time her posture, balance and confidence were transformed, allowing her to progress quickly to Shallal's main company. In our recent show Kerry performed a stunt where she pulled herself up a steep harbour slipway in her wheelchair using a mountaineering clip and is planning an aerial stunt next. Other people with physical challenges have been inspired to join Shallal after seeing what Kerry can do. She has recently worked with and auditioned for other dance companies, demonstrating her decreasing dependency on Shallal. *"Before joining Shallal I couldn't walk, couldn't dress myself, couldn't feed myself, but since*

*joining Shallal my life has changed; I'm mobile, I can walk with my frame, I can feed myself. I'm totally independent." Kerry Jackson.*

Walkabout West Cornwall App used new digital technology (iPads) to explore our local history, culture and art. The sessions inspired new creative work resulting in performances at Penlee Gallery as well as developing new partnerships that opened up more opportunities.

**Participation:**

The way Shallal is set up aids participation. Our approach is responsive to its members and wider community. We have regular focus group sessions where all members have the opportunity to help shape the term ahead.

Shallal has three community group entry points based in three different towns, making participation accessible not just to those around Penzance, but covering a wide area in Cornwall.

Approximately 200 people have benefited from hands-on workshops and activities in 2014 illustrated through our projects. The Main Company has had approximately 30 people who engage with all aspects of creation and production, both performance and back stage. People also have the opportunity to help in setting up the exhibitions and events. Creative based workshops include; dance, movement, theatre, visual arts, filmmaking, poetry and fashion which culminate in exhibitions and performances as illustrated and supported by our partners and other organisations.

In 2014 we sustained on-going opportunities such as Open House and new outreach projects such as Moving Words.

Darren Griffiths – Support worker Murdoch and Trevithick Centre Redruth – “Open House sessions empower the people that we support and give them much more self confidence, which adds to an improved quality of life and sense of achievement”.

Moving Words used sign language in all outputs; creative writing / poetry with film. We introduced poetry to young people with severe disabilities from Nancealverne School Penzance and ran celebratory taster arts/poetry/animation hands-on workshops with deaf young people at Cornwall Deaf Centre, Camborne.

**Outcomes:**

Our projects focus on social inclusion, providing isolated vulnerable people opportunities and integration within the wider Cornish community.

We evaluate all our projects extensively and use qualitative and quantitative data to evidence the benefit and impact on people. We consult with our beneficiaries and audience members. Sometimes we have questionnaires, other times we use filming techniques to gather evidence. Our outcomes may vary depending on each project but always have outcomes for people, especially those who may be vulnerable due to age, health, learning and social issues.

Outcomes include health benefits, skills and life chances. We have evaluations which evidence that through our projects participants have:

- increased their self-esteem, confidence and aspirations
- gained a sense of achievement and well being
- learnt new skills
- had a fun time
- are more physically and mentally active
- participated in other opportunities
- met new people and friends in a social and supported atmosphere
- felt part of the wider Cornish community

We have extensive knowledge and experience with our client group, their families and support systems and we have evidence that our work is an important part of supporting beneficiaries in being healthy and happy.

We also increase our profile and challenge the image of disability arts both locally and beyond by using social media and web including our website <http://www.shallal.org.uk/>, Vimeo and Facebook. Our films have proven very popular over the years, winning awards and championing inclusive arts beyond our locality.

*"Somewhere you can meet and see people and catch up, when you haven't got many places to meet and see people." Shallal member*

*"Fantastic - moving and inspirational, totally inclusive" Audience member*

*"It has given me lots of confidence and built new skills and I would like to continue with music as a hobby" Shallal participant*

*"Shallal should continue in its great work which helps people like me so much and helps people in the community understand us" Shallal participant*

*"I enjoyed performing for others without pressure of being good. Its fun what we do" Shallal participant*

*"I was amazed to see such inclusivity in action. The troop of dancers, some with disabilities some without, worked as one – the level of emotion shown was breathtaking and the movement and co-ordination of the dancers stunning. It was a powerful, inspiring example of how barriers can be removed." Jessica Corby, Equality and Diversity Consultant.*

*"I joined Shallal primarily because my son and myself were isolated within the community. Shallal enabled us to socially interact, whilst enhancing our self esteem, teaching us new skills and most importantly accepting my son's disability made us both feel human again" Parent/carer*

*"The inclusion and recognition of sometimes overlooked voices adds to the richness and humanity of our culture. The inclusive arts shows us that each of us has our own extraordinary perspective and that all of us have a right to have that valued and witnessed." Rory McDermott, facilitator.*

The impact not only is positive for participants but resonates throughout the community by challenging stereotypes and breaking down barriers of exclusion.

**Learning:**

We learn and adapt through every project we deliver. We regularly consult with service users, families and partners to identify needs. Our model of working is rooted in listening, learning and adapting to build up our strengths and tackle our weaknesses. The main challenges Shallal comes up against is sustaining projects into long term provision for people with disabilities. Although there is high demand, on-going funds are difficult to access and funding cuts make these difficult to maintain. The Main Company and some of the outreach Open House sessions are sustained due to focusing our resources on these two highly successful opportunities. Due to the extra support needed for individuals (travel arrangements, one to one support, high staff costs per head), we regularly reflect on how we continue providing high quality, diverse opportunities that have progression for individuals.

We now have in place a dedicated funding team, mostly run on a voluntary basis, which develop strategic planning and bid writing – this is a significant difference from previous years. This year has also seen a changeover of Trustees that is proving to be both exciting and beneficial due to the fantastic skills they bring. We have learnt to endeavour to create a robust framework so opportunities are always available. We are currently fundraising for our new exciting 3-year project, Cornish Doorways, which will enable the company to take the next step in becoming more resilient and sustainable, as it will give us time to implement strategies we have identified.

**Critical success factors:**

Our partnerships and connections are a vital aspect of sustaining our organisation and ensuring that our work reaches audiences and communities.

The main and enduring achievements of Shallal are overcoming stigma and challenging stereotypes through performance excellence. This showcases the talents of people who have not always found acceptance or valued roles in the communities they are part of.

We have good links and networks with; Cornwall Council Adult Social Care team, Day Care Centres, Arts for Health, NHS Kernow, The Works Dance and Theatre Cornwall, Volunteer Cornwall, The Acorn Theatre, Music Therapy Trust, as well as many individual artists and organisations who support and excite our work. In 2014 Shallal has also performed in novel places including Falmouth Art Gallery, Penlee Gallery, Falmouth University, Gyllyndune Gardens, New County Hall, Golowan festival.

Having a dedicated funding team and a board of Trustees is a very important factor, ensuring that we support the most vulnerable in our community.

Regular peer evaluation, listening and responding to members has also proved important success factors.

Here are some quotes that reflect our main achievements:

“The best thing to happen in Cornwall as it gives people with a disability of any sort the chance to show what they can do” (parent/carer)

“As a parent of a young lady with Downs Syndrome it opened up a new world for her. Shallal gave her the confidence to realize all sorts of dreams; to dance, to play clarinet, to paint, all thanks to Shallal” (parent/carer)

### **Funding and Resources:**

Our evaluation has shown us that by having a 3-year funded project helps to support the running and planning of the organisation, enabling us to develop more outreach work led by demand. This last year we have been working towards funding our next 3-year project, Cornish Doorways, an ambitious £118,000 project covering the whole County. We are currently at 80% of our target. Winning this health award will support the next phase of our important work.

Below is a list of the last year's activities, how they were funded and the amounts.

**Shallal Main Company** Arts Council England Grants for the Arts £8,955

**Open House** Cornwall Community Foundation Health and Wellbeing Grant £818.10 / Foyle Foundation £4,500 / Sylvia Adams Trust £1,000

**Shallal 2** Sylvia Adams Trust £1,000

**Friends and Dancing** People's Health Trust £8,156

**Remapping St Ives** Awards 4 All/Big Lottery £9,965 / CCF Penwith & Isles of Scilly Fund £1,000

**Aiming High** Duchy Health Trust £10,000 / Hedley Foundation £1,500 / West Cornwall Youth Trust £8,364.88

**Moving Words** Clore Duffield Foundation £8,184

**Walkabout West Cornwall App** Penlee House Gallery & Museum £1,935

**Shallal Studios** Sylvia Waddilove Foundation £600 / Elmgrant Trust £424 / Skinners Charity Lady Neville Trust £500

**Wardrobe project** Ashley Family Foundation £4,920

### **Images**

- **Title:** Shallal Main Company  
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- **Title:** Remapping St Ives Project - Kerry's stunt on the slipway  
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