



Travelling Light
THEATRE COMPANY

Impact report

2020–21

Our mission

To create outstanding theatre for and with young people that inspires their thinking, engages their emotions and fires their imaginations.

Our work is underpinned by the belief that all children and young people are entitled to creativity, imagination and the moments of shared joy brought about by experiencing great stories.

Our context in 2020-21

2020–21 was an extraordinary year, like no other in Travelling Light’s 37-year history.

As a charity based in Barton Hill, an area particularly hard hit by the coronavirus pandemic, we asked ourselves the question “as a theatre company, is there a need for our work?” It soon became clear that the answer was yes. Stories, creativity and imagination were very much still needed by children and their families, supporting wellbeing, connection and play during extremely difficult times.

Starting from a call from our local family centre for creative resources for children in their homes, we developed a responsive programme of engagement as described in this report.

It has been a year of listening to needs, trying approaches and rapidly adapting, experimenting artistically with the style and form of our work, while keeping stories at the heart of our practice. Thinking about how to use our skills and resources to support the many communities that Travelling Light connects with, from local families to schools, young people to artists. Asking difficult questions that respond to the times we are in and not always knowing the answers.

Emerging from the pandemic we will build on our partnerships, artistic discoveries and learning from this time. We know we have a vital role to play in community recovery, wellbeing and much needed shared moments of joy and imagination. We know that it will be a challenging future to navigate for everyone in the creative sector, and yet we remain optimistic, knowing that relevant, responsive work that speaks to the times we are in will continue to matter.

With enormous thanks to our staff, board, supporters, funders, donors, volunteers, and community of artists, for helping us to make a difference this year.



Dienka Hines,
Executive Director



Heidi Vaughan,
Artistic Director

Creative Activity Boxes

During the coronavirus lockdowns many of our local families had little space to play and no access to resources for creativity at home.

We created 480 story based activity boxes, which we delivered through our community partners as a free gift to local families.

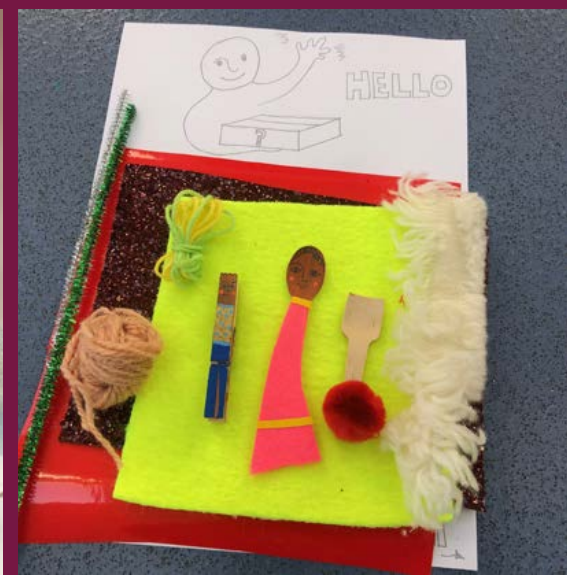
“ Thank you to all who helped in making this happen - it is amazing to hear how much the families are enjoying the packs – thank you! ”

Family support worker at the Wellspring Settlement Family Centre

“ One parent who was really struggling with home schooling found the art boxes a great way for her child to engage in something he enjoys and find his creative side. It's a project of his own ideas doing his own design. ”

Family support worker at the Wellspring Settlement Family Centre

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Igloo picture book

1,750 families across Bristol received our Igloo picture book as a free Christmas gift, distributed through foodbanks, community partners and nurseries.

Our Artistic Director worked with artist Edwina Bridgeman to create a picture book based on our early years production, Igloo. Despite lockdown preventing theatre productions, we were still able to share a seasonal story for families to enjoy together in December 2020.

“Thanks so much everyone for pulling together this incredible gift. Bristol at its best.”

North Network Lead Teacher,
Filton Avenue Nursery School & Children's Centre

“We really appreciate this kind gesture. It has come at the right time when we need it. Thanks for your continuous support.”

Parent from St Luke's Lunch, Barton Hill



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Kitchen Circus

Kitchen Circus, a partnership project with Cirque Bijou and Knowle West Media Centre, enabled three families from different areas of Bristol to work with artists to explore ideas of 'home', via Zoom and socially distanced walks.

“We really valued the chance to work with Mike again. My son Harold says he most enjoyed writing the book, and playing the games, and doing the music.”

Catherine, from the family based in Barton Hill

“I loved working on this project. The family were incredibly open, enthusiastic and creative, so it was great fun to be a part of.”

Mike Akers, Artist



Supporting artists

In 2020–21 we provided employment for 37 freelance artists and facilitators across our programme.

“ One of the things that I really love about working with Travelling Light is that it is a very supportive company and they truly understand process and the importance of process and have that firm belief of having the child at the heart of everything. Even when I was thinking, I’m really not sure if I can do this, always being reassured. ”

Edwina Bridgeman, Artist and Designer

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Research and development

Our Artistic Director continued to work with new and established artists on research and development for new shows, experimenting with artistic ideas and innovative ways to reach our audiences.

This included creating *17 and the Squeak Gobbler*, a series of short films created specifically for digital audiences.

“ We worked with some exceptional artists to create this piece; testing new ways to tell stories within a classroom. It has been a learning curve finding ways to remain playful, curious and connected to a young audience through a screen. The result is a joyful offer, with depth and plenty of subtle resonances with the time we are living in. ”

Heidi Vaughan, Artistic Director on *17 and the Squeak Gobbler*

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ActionSpeak and Louder Than Words online

During the coronavirus pandemic many young disabled people struggled with isolation, lack of routine and inability to connect with friends.

In spring 2020 we developed a bespoke digital offer for our Louder Than Words and ActionSpeak groups for young disabled people. We started with short videos for the group with activities to create at home, and then started running drama sessions on Zoom. The sessions were well received with most group members attending each week.

“ As soon as they started the Zoom sessions – she was clearly loving it and I really hope that can continue. She was just so confident with the screen. She would send me out of the room saying ‘my time, my session, with my friends. I really like that – to see that ownership and connection. She loves having everyone there, seeing everyone coming onto the screen. ”

Anne, Louder Than Words parent

“ I like it because we are a family and we all get on. We all support each other and what needs we have and it’s just lovely. ”

Kezia, ActionSpeak member

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Youth Theatre and Arts Award online

During the year we ran termly masterclasses for our youth theatre, working with artists to tell their stories.

In addition, seven young people gained their Arts Award through mentoring from our Travelling Light team.

“Bronze Arts Award has given me the motivation to do things that I wouldn’t have done otherwise.”

Arts Award participant

“It was amazing how accessible the arts were despite everything being closed, for us not being able to travel much in normal circumstances due to ill health it was a real boon and a treasured experience to be supported with access by Travelling Light, we can’t thank you all enough for enabling this Arts Award course for our child.”

Parent of Arts Award participant



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Boing! online schools tour

We took our award-winning Christmas show Boing! on a schools tour in December 2020, online!

Between 7–18 December, children from 8 schools and children's centres in Bristol sat down to enjoy the performance. Each school also received an activity and story pack containing lots of activities to support teachers and pupils with fun, creative learning.

“It was a fantastic enriching experience that our children loved. Thank you!”

Filton Avenue Primary School



“It was lovely for the children to experience a theatre show without having to take a trip there in the current climate.”

Oldfield Park Infant School



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In 2020-21
we were proud that:

4,000

Children and carers enjoyed our creative resources in their own homes

480

Local families enjoyed our creative activity boxes, enabling children to create stories.

1,750

Families received our Igloo picture book gift at Christmas.

1,637

Children enjoyed screenings of Boing! in their schools and nurseries.

We provided employment for **37** freelance artists and facilitators.

Through research and development we created **1 new show** for digital audiences, which has now been experienced by approximately **28,000** school children.

Our Artistic Director did in-depth research and development work with **4 artists** during the year, exploring new artistic ideas.

Since April 2021

We have continued to reach out to bring stories and creative opportunities to children, young people and families with a mixture of in-person and digital work.

We continued our partnership with St Luke's Lunch to support families in Barton Hill that rely on free school meals. We provided creative workshops for children during the holidays, with St Luke's Lunch providing free meals.

Youth Theatre, ActionSpeak and Louder Than Words participants have enjoyed returning to our studio for face to face sessions.

Our new production, Vixen, is touring to schools and community venues across Bristol in autumn 2021, with both a live show and a digital version available.

17 and the Squeak Gobbler, our free digital offer, was distributed to schools nationally and reached 28,000 pupils in summer 2021.

Light Up School Learning, our 2 year schools project funded by Paul Hamlyn Foundation, started in September 2021. We will support Bristol's teachers and school leaders to embed arts-based learning in the primary curriculum.



**Be part of our story,
become a Friend or donate today.**

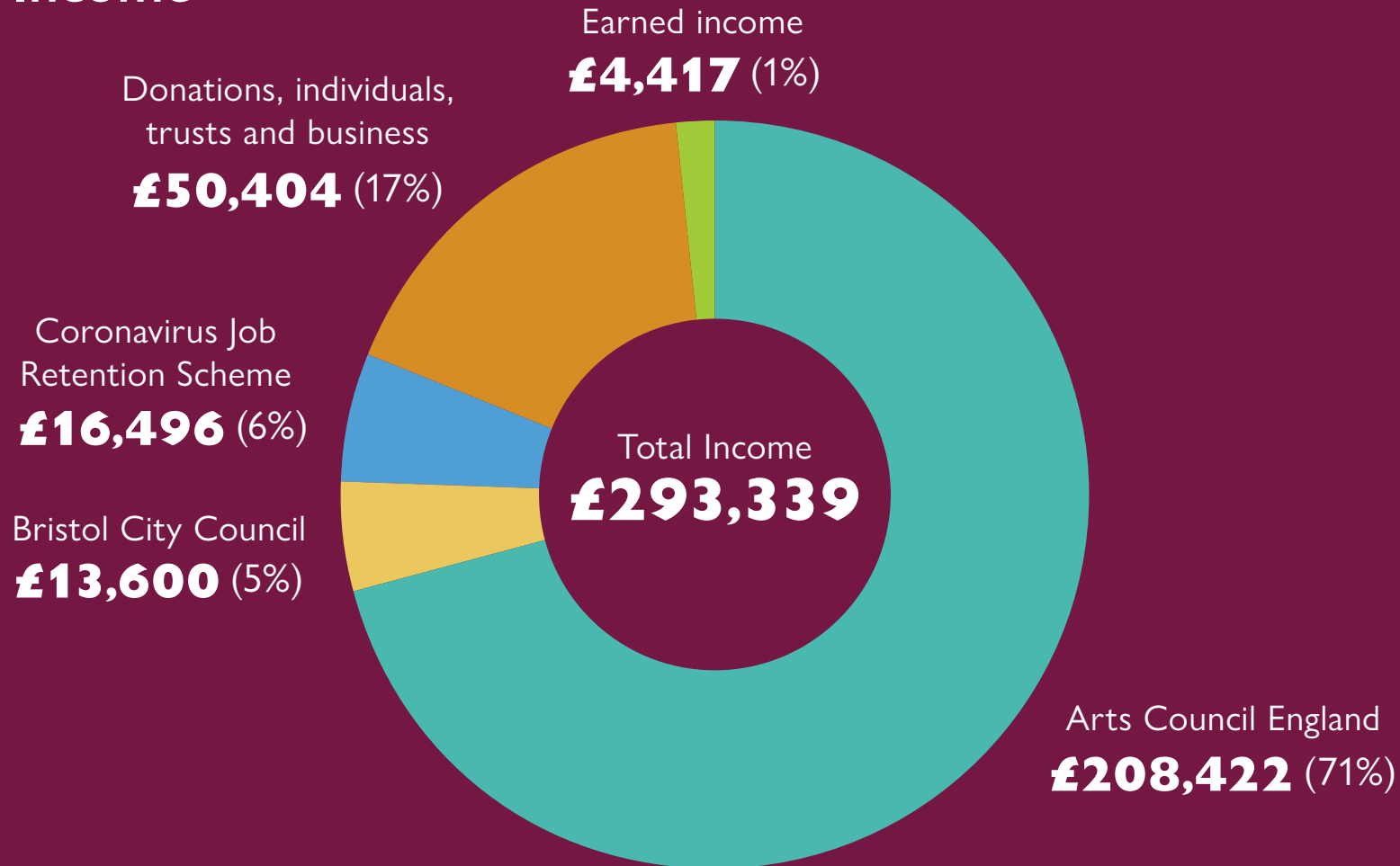
Our Friends are our most valued supporters, making regular donations which enable us to plan for the future and invest in creative opportunities for children and young people all year round.

You can make a real difference, providing opportunities to create and imagine for all children and young people, especially those who are least able to seek them.

**To become a Travelling Light Friend
or to make a one-off donation, visit
travellinglighttheatre.org.uk/donate**

Financial information

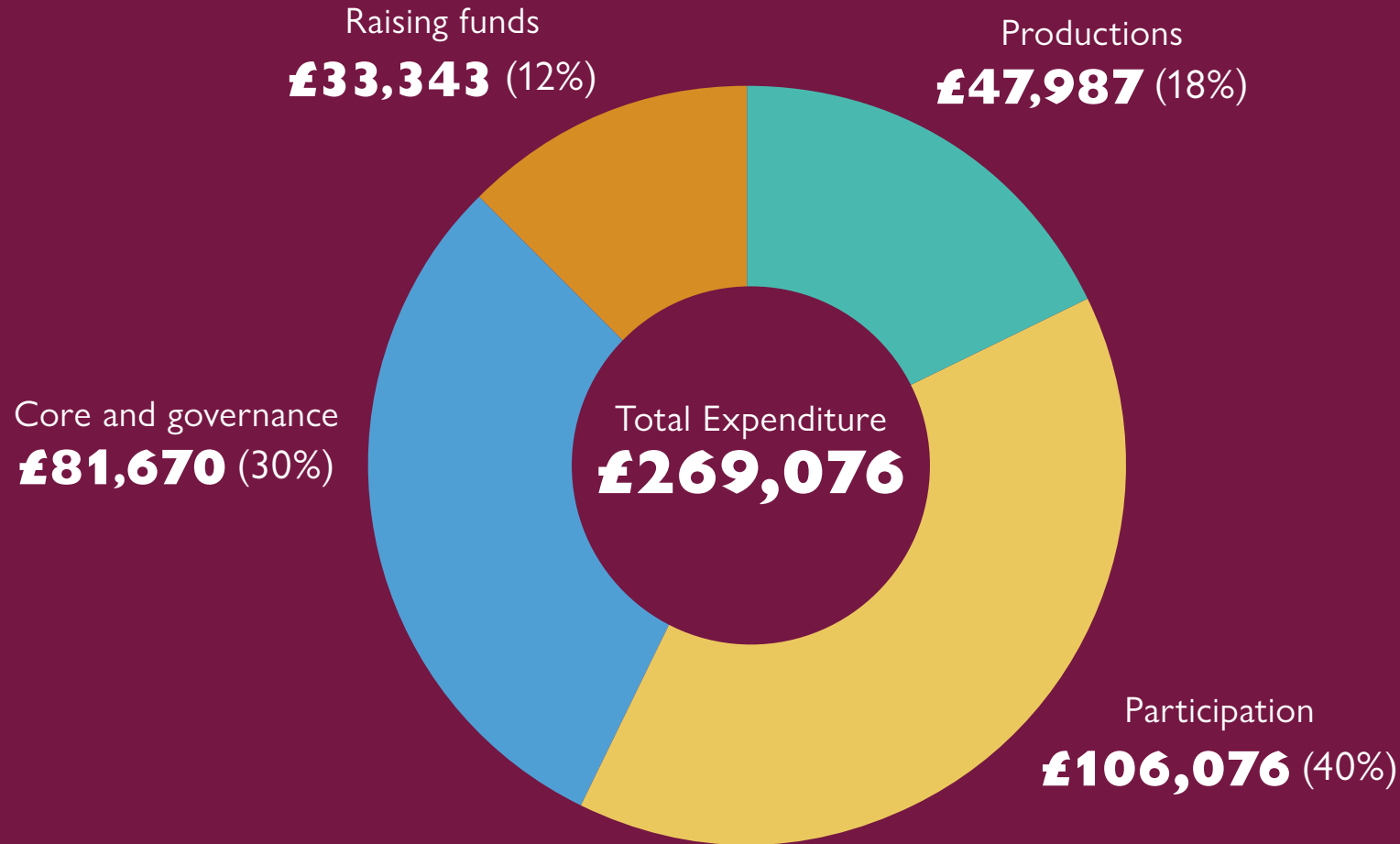
2020-21 Income



Full copies of our end of year accounts are available on request.

Financial information

2020-21 Expenditure



Full copies of our end of year accounts are available on request.

Thank you!

Staff

Ali Sully (General Manager)
Becky Vowles (Production Manager – from Jul 2021)
Dienka Hines (Executive Director)
Heidi Vaughan (Artistic Director)
Jamie Harber (Marketing & Communications Manager)
Lizzy Stephens (Creative Learning Officer)
Lou Betts (Youth & Community Officer)

Trustees

Aimee-Louise Malcolm (until Jul 2020)
Ian Stickland
Jennifer Blackwood
Joanna Cross
John Middleton (Chair)
Marc Leverton
Nick Murphy (until Dec 2020)
Polly Derbyshire
Tom Rowe

Artists and Organisations

Adam Peck, Alex Lupo, Alex Vann, Angela Athay-Hunt, Bradley Greening, Bruno Chavez, Camilla Adams, Camilla Evans, Chris Woodward, Clare Greenhalgh, DL Williams, Edward Felton, Edwina Bridgeman, Felix Hayes, Florence Espeut-Nickless, Gavin Vincent, John O'Hara, John Pfumojena, Kamaljit Poonia, Katie Sykes, Kerrie Burke-Avery, Kerry Russell, Leeza Awojobi, Maddie Shann, Maisie Newman, Matt Ginter, May Kindred Boothby, Megan Vaughan-Thomas, Mike Akers, Rebecca Braccialarghe, Richard Worsnop, Saikat Ahamed, Sally Cookson, Sophie Turner, Tamsin Kennard, Toby Thompson, Vince Virr, Xahnaa Adlam, WECIL, Barton Hill Academy, Barton Hill Activity Club, Bristol Old Vic, Cashmore Early Years Centre, Cirque Bijou, Easton Community Children's Centre, Feeding Bristol, Felix Road Adventure Playground, Knowle West Media Centre, Raised in Bristol, The Spark Arts for Children, St George pre-school, St Lukes Church Barton Hill, St Nicholas of Tolentine School, St Philips Marsh Nursery, TALO, The Devil's Violin, We Are Bristol Kids, Wellspring Settlement Family Centre, Barton Hill Academy, City Academy, Victoria Park Primary School, Redfield Educate Together, Ashley Down Federation.

Photography

Camilla Adams, Edward Felton, Louise Betts
Jamie Harber, Hide The Shark, Mike Akers.

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