

“What more can we do to create a better future for theatre in the West Midlands?”

Dear friend

Eighteen months ago Alison Gagen invited us, the region's independent theatre community, to the original Challenge for Change Open Space event at The Crescent Theatre. The idea and the invitation grew out of collective passions and frustrations with theatre, about how we love theatre but still felt frustrated and dismayed with how it happens sometimes.

The event proved a fantastic catalyst for collective action and initiatives, some of them are obvious, others, equally important, are more subtle and tangential. It spawned a working group which still meets; the 2010 Theatre Pledge; the On Call Initiative and helped prompt the BE Festival. It also enabled meetings and conversations, new partnerships and renewed alliances. Since then much else has changed in the Theatre landscape. We feel it's high time for the region's Theatre Community to meet again in Open Space.

Please come and join us for two days in Open Space addressing the above question and ANY related issues. This is a great opportunity for the theatre and performing community to gather and work on what could be improved; the things that we are passionate about and the things we wish were different. The event will be facilitated by Nick Sweeting from Improbable who have pioneered the use of Open Space within the UK's artistic community.

What is Open Space?

Although **OPEN SPACE** may be new to you, it has been used all over the world with great success. Unlike other conference formats, it is an exciting open-ended event that enables a self-organising group to use its collective imagination to set the agenda and deal with complex issues through a series of participant lead breakout sessions. This model:

- Allows great results to be achieved in an incredibly short space of time;
- Allows participants to be proactive in establishing and solving common issues;
- Ensures that no-one will be bored by never ending key note speeches!

By the end of the event the following will have occurred:

- Every issue of concern to anybody will have been raised, if they took responsibility for doing that.
- All issues will have received full discussion, to the extent desired.
- A full report of issues and discussions will be in the hands of all participants
- And YOU will have taken part in making it happen.

A strong point of Open Space is its ability to unite groups of enormous diversity, to that end we are encouraging everybody to participate.

Please forward this email to any theatre practitioner who you think would be interested in having their say.

The event will take place on 23rd & 24th June @ A E Harris, 110 Northwood Street, Birmingham, B3 1SZ. Between 10:00 and 17:00.

RSVP

In order to feed everyone it would be useful to have a good indication of how many people intend to attend. Please therefore send an RSVP to openspace@aeharrisvenue.co.uk. There is no charge for attending this Open Space event.

See you there.....

Signed Mid*Point Steering Committee

*The mid*point steering group is made up of the following individuals:*

Alison Gagen, Arts Council England
Amanda Roberts, mac
Catherine Edwards
David Allen, Midlands Actors Theatre
Ed Collier, Chinaplate Theatre
Harun Morrison, Fierce! Festival
James Yarker, Stan's Cafe
Jane Packman, Jane Packman Company

Jonny O'Hanlon, Hamfisted
Kindle Theatre
Laura McDermott, Fierce! Festival
Liz Tomlin, Birmingham University
Mike Tweddle, Be Festival
Orit Azaz, Independent Producer
Orla O'Loughlin, Pentabus
Paul Warwick, Chinaplate Theatre
Pippa Frith, Women & Theatre
Raidene Carter, Birmingham REP
Steve Johnstone, Black Country Touring
Tom Wildish, Foursight Theatre