



# BOARD INFORMATION PACK

## 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Recent Key Achievements

- £1.8million raised to build the award winning Level Centre, opened in 2008.
- A successful Arts Council National Portfolio Application has secured £416,400 funding for the 2018-2022 period.
- A successful Arts Council Strategic Touring award for 2018 – 2020.
- Approx. 20,000 attendances per year across our programme.

### Introduction

At its heart LEVEL is inventive, experimental and progressive. It is committed to changing the way learning disabled people and the wider community see and value their creativity. It nurtures creative talent and creates and presents original new work.

The LEVEL Centre is a contemporary arts space providing opportunities for people to discover, experience and be inspired by cutting edge art, ideas and culture in rural Derbyshire.

LEVEL creates new work and deliberately challenges conventional artistic practice, thinking and process. It is rapidly developing a national reputation for producing and promoting art that is different, powerful and relevant to many sectors of our society - art that is not afraid to be different.

LEVEL is home to ground breaking arts projects with learning disabled people, providing fully accessible creative spaces together with the resources to produce high quality, inspirational new work.

LEVEL is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation creating stimulating, engaging and powerful art with over 6,000 people every year.

LEVEL is a space for developing new creative ideas. Our work requires us to constantly explore new ways of working and engaging creatively with people. Our Research & Development programme is at the heart of this and gives artists time, resources and the support required to make experimental and brave new work.

The last 24 months has seen a significant changes and challenges at LEVEL. The appointment of Andrew Williams as Artistic Director and Imogen Trinder as Projects and Development Manager has brought a renewed energy and an ability to see the future through fresh eyes. There is a new way of working based upon an artistic vision that connects with the history & philosophy of the organisation whilst also enabling it to develop new and exciting areas of work. There have been challenges to overcome for the staff and Directors of LEVEL and the economic, geographic, infrastructural and cultural climate in which we operate will continue to present both obstacles and opportunities for the organisation. An intensive period of review and reflection has enabled LEVEL to look critically at the organisation, assess performance and build a new programme with renewed sense of confidence and ownership. We are in a strong position to plan a bright future and ensure that the organisations tremendous legacy continues to live on in LEVEL.

A successful NPO bid has confirmed the Arts Council's confidence in LEVEL's past achievements and future aspirations and allows LEVEL to move forward confidently.

## **Background and Achievements**

First Movement came into existence in 1987 following a series of discussions between people providing services to people with learning disabilities in Derbyshire, and two artists (then living in London) who had been involved in creating a specialist experiential arts project with learning disabled people with major communication difficulties. The service providers became some of the first Trustees of the Charity, First Movement Trust, and the artists, Peter Shelton and Caroline Bagnall became its first staff.

When First Movement started working in 1988 its first priority was people living in what were then very isolated Long Stay Hospitals (“out of sight, out of mind”). It was aware that the pressure for the closure of these institutions was imminent, and people with major needs would be returning to live in the community – a community not well prepared to accept them. It worked with people while they were still living in hospital, during their transition to the community, and then by establishing long-term community projects that helped embed them in their community.

Over time First Movement has developed and grown, reaching out to a broader range of people with learning disabilities, over a wider geographical area with an ever widening range of opportunities but throughout the work has celebrated the abilities and the choices of learning disabled people.

Under Peter Shelton’s leadership First Movement developed a strong track record of digital research and development projects which has delivered new models of digital music, video and videoconferencing and which led to the creation of the Level Centre, a state of the art facility in rural Derbyshire. From 2005-08 First Movement raised £1.8million to build the award winning Level Centre.

In early 2015 the Board of Directors agreed that First Movement would rebrand as LEVEL and the legal name change was completed in March 2015. In September multi media composer and director Andrew Williams was appointed as the new Director of LEVEL. Since this time the organisation has developed considerably, increasing its quality of work, output, reach and cultural impact. LEVEL now has a new vision and an exciting, cutting edge programme which allows many people to be inspired and engaged through contemporary art. The Gallery and Events space house work by national and international artists together with the creation of new installations, touring work, visual arts exhibitions, publications, projects and events all underpinned by a rich research and development programme.

## **Mission, Purpose and Values**

**LEVEL creates, promotes and celebrates the art that ‘difference’ makes.**

- We develop a broad range of bespoke art projects designed to engage and inspire people with complex needs and support them to develop a unique arts language.
- LEVEL nurtures creative talent and presents stunning original work by and in collaboration with learning disabled people; artwork that we believe extends the language of contemporary art.
- We research, interrogate, develop, produce, present and promote contemporary work with a focus on innovation.
- Our purpose-built centre in rural Derbyshire provides a collaborative hub for innovation, production and research.

The following key values are at the heart of LEVEL and underpin everything we do.

### **Inventive**

- Inspired and enriched by those we work with.
- Exploring the creative possibilities of new technology.
- Creating bespoke work geared to the specific needs of participants.
- Experimental in our approach.

### **Rigorous**

- Ensuring the highest quality approaches of ourselves and those we work with.
- Measuring the impact and value of our work.
- Keeping abreast of new developments in technology, artistic practice and politics.
- Continuous research and review integral to our practice.

### **Inclusive/Diverse**

- Assuming an equal place for all and a right to communicate ideas creatively.
- Nurturing creative talent.
- Challenging social and political boundaries that can limit the artistic aspirations of learning disabled people and the wider disability community.

### **Strategic Objectives for 2018-22**

LEVEL has just completed its business planning process for 2018 -22 and has agreed the following 6 key strategic objectives over the period of the plan.

1. To consolidate our position as a National Centre of Excellence for innovative cultural artistic practice and continue to strengthen our specialism in artistic engagement and the creation of art that inspires and stimulates people with profound multiple disabilities and complex needs.
2. Expand the reach and impact of our work across a wider sector of society, including artists and cultural sectors.
3. Develop our research & development programmes and extend our network of research partners.
4. Increase the capacity for the organisation to produce high quality work that can be presented on a National and International stage. Work that can widen our cultural understanding and appreciation of 'the art that difference makes'.
5. Develop our network of national and international partners.
6. Develop our funding base and increase the number of supporters, friends and potential donors. Grow the LEVEL family.

## Roles and Responsibilities of a Director

Detailed Terms of Reference are currently being developed and will be forwarded to you by 16<sup>th</sup> March. Specific requirements include;

1. An awareness and understanding of the needs of our core service users.
2. Being able to commit to prepare for and participate in full board meetings. There are 4 full board meetings per year and it is expected that Directors should if possible attend all of these and at the very least a minimum of 2 per year.
3. A willingness and availability to attend key events at the Level Centre.
4. Where required and available to take part in sub group meetings or time limited working groups.
5. Where required and available to represent LEVEL at external meetings and networking events.
6. Have attended The Level Centre for familiarisation with the charity's work and assets prior to appointment.

In return as a Director you will have the opportunity to;

- Play an active role in overseeing an innovative programme of work.
- Be part of a unique organisation at a moment of change.
- Be in contact and networking with exciting and influential people.
- Make a difference to the lives of the learning disabled community.
- Go to previews, opening nights and training sessions.
- Potentially have access to a range of facilities at the Level Centre.

## 2. RECRUITMENT PROCESS

### 1. What we are looking for

We are seeking people with some of the following skills and experience to join the Board of Directors.

- **Finance and budgeting** (with the potential to take on the Treasurer role)
- **Health and Social Care** (including skills to advocate with the Learning Disabled sector and/ or Public Sector contracting experience)
- **Learning Disability Community** – experience of working with/ caring for service users.
- **Marketing** Strategy and Planning
- **Artistic + Creative** (including programme development and / or ability to connect and network within priority fields)
- **Digital Technology and IT** (with knowledge to support programme development and/ or with strong connections to external networks)
- **Leadership and HR** (with the potential to take on the Chair role)

Secondary experience and skills in fundraising, business, charity research or higher education are also useful.

As well as potential Directors we are also interested in hearing from anybody who might become advisors or ambassadors for the organisation.

## **2. Expression of Interest**

If you are interested in joining the board please send us a CV or a short summary telling us something about your background to help us understand your skills and experience, and why you are interested in being a Director at LEVEL.

Please email this by 1.00pm on 3 June 2019 to [andrew@levelcentre.com](mailto:andrew@levelcentre.com) or post it to FAO of Andrew Williams, Level Centre, Old Station Close, Rowsley, Derbyshire DE4 2EL.

## **3. Joining the board**

Once we have received your expression of interest we will invite people with the relevant skills and experience to attend a board recruitment event on 12 June 2019. During the evening you will have the chance to find out more about LEVEL and to meet with the staff, board members and some of the participants from LEVEL. During the event you will also have the opportunity to meet with individual members of the team to discuss in more detail what you might bring to LEVEL as well as you being able to find out if LEVEL is right for you.

If you are not able to make the event then please tell us as soon as possible and we will try and make other arrangements.

We will contact you by 14 June 2019 to confirm if we would like to invite you to join the board.

## **4. Induction Process**

New Directors will be invited to the board meeting on 19 June 2019. Once we have welcomed new Board members to the organisation, new Directors will be invited to take part in a board development process kicking off with a workshop following the Board meeting.