



OUR VISION

Artsreach will enrich and positively impact the lives of people in Dorset by connecting and empowering rural communities through creative and cultural experiences.

Artsreach is a registered charity and rural touring organisation based in Dorset. Each year we tour approximately 130+ live performances to around 40 rural community venues. Established for over 30 years, Artsreach works in partnership with volunteer promoter teams across the county, who select cultural events from our menu to host in non-traditional, small-scale venues - predominantly village halls. This model enables rural communities to access high quality art in a friendly, familiar environment without travelling far, and artists can enjoy performing in very active, sociable and enthusiastic communities. Venues are intimate, with capacities ranging from around 60-120, and therefore tend to be much more engaging than a conventional theatre space. We always try to offer new companies/artists each year, but also enjoy building relationships with touring performers over the years.

What we are looking for:

Artsreach works with a broad range of touring artists that produce and tour accessible performances of a high quality. We work with companies/artists based locally, regionally, nationally and occasionally internationally. In most cases we book companies that we have seen or that come recommended by other touring schemes, and companies that fit our artistic policy.

The majority of our venues are not technically equipped and so we tend to work with companies that tour with their own lights and sound.

Attractive, informative, professionally produced publicity is essential. We are happy to give advice about this whilst artists are at the design stage. First impressions make a big impact on volunteer promoters, and good publicity materials instil confidence in them and their audiences.

How it works:

In rural touring the artist and the audience have an informal and intimate space to meet each other. There is no stage door, so make sure you are prepared for the delights and challenges that rural touring offers. If you are new to rural touring we strongly recommend that you go to www.ruraltouring.org and request a copy of 'Eyes Wide Open' – the guide for companies who are thinking about trying rural touring.

Please be aware that we hear from hundreds of companies wanting to tour with us and so we cannot respond to all unsolicited enquiries. The better you present yourself/ves, the more enthusiastic we will be about working with you. We like companies that are communicative, responsive and hot on publicity and marketing.

Getting on to the Artsreach menu doesn't mean you're booked – but we hope that you will be, and will work hard to achieve this. Communities actively choose what shows they want to host in their spaces, with guidance from us. Successfully matching shows/ communities and venues is where our knowledge and experience comes in, though this can take a little time.

Our promoters are volunteers – they will make you a cup of tea, provide you with a hot meal, run the box office and often offer you a bed for the night – they are unlikely to have a formal marketing strategy or be able to operate a lighting board. Therefore your willingness and ability to communicate well with our volunteer promoters is of great value to both them and us!

When we need to hear from you:

The best time to send us information about your production is January/February.

Between March and May our programming group go through all the show information sent to us and select productions to put forward for our 'menu' of events, which is then produced and distributed to our promoters mid-May. The menu gives details of all productions available for booking from September of that year through to the following Easter. Promoters select from this menu the shows they ideally would like to host in their community.

Our Performance Programme brochure comes out three times a year - the autumn programme covers September to December; the spring programme covers January to Easter (varying between March/April) and the slightly smaller summer programme covers April to August.

Selection Criteria

As an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, Artsreach strives to provide the rural communities of Dorset with access to touring work of the highest quality. We seek work which is suitable for rural audiences of all ages, including drama, dance, music, physical theatre, circus, storytelling and multi-disciplinary art forms encompassing cultural diversity and international work. Work is selected with the following criteria in mind:

- The quality and the innovative nature of the work
- The promotion of new work by companies with whom a good partnership has been established and whose reputation for challenging and entertaining work is based upon the careful monitoring of recent performances
- The track record of the company or performer(s) based on the scheme manager's experience and knowledge, and/or references from other touring schemes, Arts Councils, local authority arts officers or specialist arts agencies and promoter reviews
- The company or performers' back up in terms of high quality and appropriate publicity materials, sound and efficient administration, full technical support and transport, insurance and adherence to other health and safety requirements
- The ability to present work in non-equipped venues (the staging of the performance must be adaptable to the range of venue sizes and varied technical resources)
- Ensuring that a range of art form and companies are represented within the programme
- Ensuring we enable audiences to access artists/companies who are not already touring to venues in the county on a regular basis independently
- The contribution the work will make to the development of the scheme.

Companies applying to the Artsreach scheme are considered against the above criteria and balanced with budget restrictions. Please email us any comments or questions.

Thank you.

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www.artsreach.co.uk