Dance: A Great British Success Story

How politicians can support dance
Dance happens across the UK. We welcome the voices of a dedicated group of parliamentarians in the All Party Parliamentary Dance Group who have championed dance since 2006. They believe dance is not only an important art form, but is a powerful force for achieving a healthier lifestyle in general with proven success in tackling particular challenges including obesity, Parkinson’s Disease, cancer and loneliness. They promote its education and social benefits.

“I love dance. I chair the All-Party Parliamentary Dance Group. I love ballet, both classical and modern. I love dance in Broadway musicals. I love dance in classic Hollywood musicals and had the pleasure of meeting Gene Kelly, who made my favorite film of all time, Singin’ in the Rain. My own constituency in Manchester is a home for Irish dancing and South Asian Bangla dancing. This report is marvelous. It is full of inspiration, action and encouragement.”

Rt Hon Sir Gerald Kaufman MP, Labour, Manchester Gorton Chair, All Party Parliamentary Dance Group

“For over 40 years I have greatly enjoyed top class dance performances; but the benefits of dance are far more wide-ranging than the pleasure given to audiences. Dance at all levels plays a key role in exercise, building confidence and increasing participation amongst a range of social and cultural groups. I greatly look forward to seeing the 2015 Dance Manifesto and seeing the great work that Dance UK consistently produce.”

Rt Hon Don Foster MP, Liberal Democrat, Bath

“To have a special dance class in the Houses of Parliament to launch the Dance Manifesto is a first. I hope that many MPs and Peers will take advantage of the opportunity to upgrade their dancing techniques and to learn something new, and also to find out more about the numbers and quality of their local dance teachers who, after all, run small businesses at the heart of their communities.”

The Baroness Hooper CMG, Conservative Co-Vice Chair, All Party Parliamentary Dance Group

“The UK produces some of the most exciting dancers, choreographers and dance companies famous around the world today. The diversity of dance talent represents the richness of British culture. As a young girl I loved to dance, I support the Dance Manifesto’s goal that all children will have the chance to take part in dance in and outside school.”

The Rt Hon. the Baroness Boothroyd OM, Crossbench
Dance has never been so popular in the UK

In 2014, over 10 million people watched the BBC’s Strictly Come Dancing every Saturday. Big Dance 2012, the largest UK-wide dance programme ever, involved 5.7 million people. The Government’s Taking Part survey found that 8.4% of the population took part in dance activities, either dancing or in audiences, and research in Scotland shows dance is the most popular physical activity in the country. A 2013 Mothercare survey indicates that becoming a dancer is the fourth most popular career ambition for children, and surprisingly it is a more popular choice for boys than girls.

“Dance encourages physical exercise and promotes mental agility, especially the ability to concentrate. It develops an appreciation of music, raises the spirits and boosts the ability of self-expression. Dance also encourages team work, personal goal setting and discipline. I fully support more opportunities for dance across all age groups and sections of society.”

Darcey Bussell CBE,
Former Principal Dancer of The Royal Ballet, President of the Royal Academy of Dance, judge of BBC 1’s Strictly Come Dancing
We urge politicians to:

**Ensure dance is an integral part of every young person’s education with the same status as music, maths and English.**

More children take part in dance outside school hours than any other physical activity. They love to dance and want to study dance at school. This is a fantastic opportunity to inspire children to be active, plant the seeds for a life-long commitment to regular exercise, and offer a solution for children who dread competitive sports. Research by University College London’s Institute of Child Health shows half of seven year olds don’t get enough exercise. More dance in schools is part of the answer.

“I am a very strong advocate for dance education. In my role as Director of Studies at Clare College Cambridge, and as part of the admissions process, I encourage students not only to specialise in the relevant science subjects, but also in other areas, particularly an arts subject such as Dance, Music, Art, English Literature.”

**Nicola S Clayton FRS**, Professor of Comparative Cognition, University of Cambridge, Fellow of the Royal Society, Scientist in Residence at Rambert
What politicians can do to help:

- Speak up for the benefits of dance as an essential part of a balanced curriculum for children. Studying dance is not a soft option, it helps young people develop a combination of physical and academic skills, including discipline, communication skills, teamwork, analytic ability, understanding of physiology and confidence.

- Invest in more specialist dance teachers in schools. Though 96% of schools in England in 2010 offered dance, just over 4% of PE teachers held a post A-level qualification in Dance. We need more PGCE trained dance teachers and resources for schools to connect with dance organisations and the thousands of specialist private dance teachers around the UK.
We urge politicians to:

**Recognise and act to harness the proven health and wellbeing benefits of dance to communities.**

Recent Cambridge University research shows lack of exercise is twice as deadly as obesity. Getting more adults to take regular exercise is vital to improving the health of the nation. Dance is the most popular physical activity for women and research in Scotland shows more people dance than play football.

With a dance style to appeal to people of all ages and abilities, this is a form of exercise we can’t afford to ignore. The Exercise, Movement & Dance Partnership (EMDP) and Skills Active’s ‘Working in Fitness Survey’ (2015) found that 21% of fitness teachers and instructors deliver dance-based activities. Major charities such as MIND, Diabetes UK and the British Heart Foundation are already championing dance programmes, and dance organisations are creating important health projects to reach out across communities, ranging from English National Ballet’s Dance for Parkinson’s to Strictly Give it a Go providing dance classes for cancer patients, their families and friends in Plymouth.
Health & Wellbeing

What politicians can do to help:

• Embed dance in public health strategies delivered by local government, health and social care services, and include dance and keep fit classes in commissioning from local health and social care service providers.

• Encourage primary schools to use their PE & Sport Premium funding to deliver more dance activity.

• Dance classes need space – we call for local governments to include dance in local planning strategies, providing affordable spaces for community dance classes and create new affordable dance spaces.

“Dance like there’s no one watching,” is what my brilliant, enthusiastic and energetic Zumba instructor Maxine Jones says to all of us before every class. Going to these classes is the only time I have ever actually relished doing exercise and I look forward to every one. The classes are held in a church hall just around the corner and it only costs a fiver. I go to at least twice a week and would do more if I could. Of course it is all about the teacher and how they give you confidence and make sure you are having fun and seeing results. For me it’s about having fun and a chance to just shake off the cares of the day. I feel fitter, happier and healthier.

Lorraine Kelly, OBE, Broadcaster and Journalist
We urge politicians to:

**Champion dance as a great UK art form – we are home to world class dancers, choreographers, dance companies and theatres**

From Matthew Bourne’s block-busting, *Swan Lake* to classical kathak performances, from *Cats* to Candoco Dance Company, renowned for integrating disabled and non-disabled dancers, the UK has become a centre for world class dancers and choreographers who are choosing to train in the UK and build their careers here.

Theatres across the UK and in the vibrant West End are presenting high quality and exciting dance shows enjoyed by audiences of all ages and backgrounds and expanding their outreach dance programmes for local residents. Dance is at the heart of our growing creative industries, from pop videos to films, and at the recent BAFTA awards Eddie Redmayne credited the choreographer Alexandra Reynolds in his acceptance speech.
Dance can communicate so much about what it means to be British as demonstrated by the awe-inspiring Olympic, Paralympic and Rugby world-cup ceremonies that all showcased dance to create a huge impact on international audiences and to offer unique opportunities for diverse communities to come together.

"The UK’s conservatoires are rightly acknowledged as world-leaders and demand from international applicants is consequently strong. Last year, over 200 students from outside the UK auditioned for a dance place at Trinity Laban – despite the far cheaper training many could access in their home countries. And the reason is simple. UK conservatoire training leads to successful employment outcomes. The annual government survey which assesses the employment success of recent graduates consistently shows the conservatoires in the upper reaches of the universities table. Dance training in the UK leads to vibrant and meaningful careers and should be as highly valued at home as it is abroad."

Professor Anthony Bowne
Principal, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance
Brand UK

What politicians can do to help:

• Champion and support local dance companies, schools and organisations that contribute significantly to the cultural, social and economic capital in your constituencies.

• Develop dedicated funding to enable local theatres to afford to present dance companies so more people can enjoy dance in their local areas.

• Support Arts Council England, Creative Scotland, Arts Council of Wales and Arts Council of Northern Ireland to invest in young and emerging artists to experiment, research and take risks; to safeguard and provide a seedbed for the next generation of great dance artists and leaders to emerge.

• Continue to fund the Dance and Drama Award scheme, and the Centres for Advanced Training in Dance, to support exceptionally talented young people with their pre-professional training, to ensure equal access to the dance profession.

• Ensure Local Enterprise Partnerships and local authorities recognise that creating spaces is vital for dance to be available to audiences and participants at the heart of communities, and to maintain and attract dance talent to the area. These spaces act as an economic driver for associated businesses and area regeneration.
To find out more about the Dance Manifesto or to connect with local dance activities in your area, please contact Dance UK at www.danceuk.org, email info@danceuk.org or call 020 7713 0730

For politicians who would like to join the All Party Parliamentary Dance Group please contact Dance UK Director, Caroline Miller, caroline@danceuk.org