

















BLACKPOOL
Capital Of Dance®





- A new open-access arts festival that positions Blackpool as the **Capital of Dance**.
- A multi-venue, town-wide, Edinburgh fringe-style event will provide a whirlwind of rhythm and movement, from ballroom elegance to contemporary grooves. All dance genres and physical theatre will be welcomed.
- Building on the resort's famous dance heritage, live shows, street performances, workshops and social events will unite lovers of dance.
- The month-long pilot event is planned from 14 June to 15 July 2024.

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Place-Making

- Growing recognition of the importance of cultural activity and the role it can play in the lives of people, communities and places.
- DCMS published The Culture White Paper¹ & acknowledged the role cultural activity has on an individual's physical and mental health, education and life chances, in pride of place & driving local economic growth and community cohesion.
- Blackpool has its own dance cultural identity. The white paper states: "...what is local and unique has a special value and should be supported and encouraged."
- A place-making event capitalises on a community's unique assets, inspiration & potential with the intention of creating public spaces, places, events and activities that promote people's health, happiness and well-being.



Authenticity & Heritage

- Two world-famous ballrooms.
- Blackpool hosts over 12 major dance competitions.
- The Empress Ballroom hosts The Blackpool Dance Festival, held annually for over 100 years, 3,000+ competitors from over 60 countries compete.
- Blackpool Tower Ballroom hosts Strictly Come Dancing, Britain's most watched TV show with almost 9m viewers
- Pleasure Beach Blackpool boasts the world's longest-running ice dance spectacular – Hot Ice
- Funny Girls, the country's best-loved drag show since 1994.
- The Grand Theatre presents ballet and contemporary dance, including Breakin' Convention.
- The Opera House is the number one touring house for musical theatre shows.
- The world's longest-running dance troupe, The Tiller Girls, started in the 1890's with dancers from Blackpool, the brand was exported all over the world, including appearances in Hollywood movies.

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Social Dance

- Novelty dances and big bands led the way through the 20's & 30's as people arrived in droves on Dance Trains.
- Soldiers from both sides of the Atlantic trained and danced in Blackpool during the blitz of World War II. These years provide nostalgic memories for many families around the UK.
- Rock 'n' Roll sessions on the piers introduced youth culture to the resort during the '50s.
- In the 60s and '70s, 3,500 people danced nightly at The Mecca Ballroom to live bands & then Northern Soul.
- Joe Loss and his big band provided dancing at the Stardust Gardens floorshow in the Winter Gardens in the 1970's.
- By the 1980s, the resort boasted over 75 nightclubs where everyone danced.
- The 1990's into the new millennium saw the introduction of super-clubs: The Palace, Heaven & Hell and The Syndicate.



Community Opportunities

Capital of Dance will work closely with local charities & communities across Blackpool, to break down barriers that might prevent groups and individuals from coming to & participating in the festival.

We will target those who wouldn't normally have the opportunity to access or experience the arts or the festival.

The success of Capital of Dance relies on the town, its residents and businesses.

- Volunteering opportunities.
- Movement workshops for Parkinson's & dementia.



Capital of Dance will:

- Be a democratic open-to-all festival. A stage for all to watch or participate whatever your age or physical ability.
- Create opportunities and provide aspirations for Blackpool's young people.
- Instil civic pride in the resort.
- To actively engage local communities, targeting specific social problems, eg, obesity, isolation for older people.
- To develop a local child/young person to be a world class dancer.
- To provide access to workshops from professional companies.

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Business Aims

- To be the first town-wide event that genuinely unifies businesses and venues, working together for a common arts purpose for the benefit of local communities, the resort's businesses and the local economy.
- Drive a localised micro-cluster of creative jobs.
- The small independents are given a level playing field with the bigger culture venues.
- Provides a badge for everyone to position Blackpool in a positive light.
- **Long Term Aims:**
 - Build on Blackpool's existing dance heritage to become the UNESCO City/Capital of Dance.
 - Create a year-round Blackpool-based dance company to provide a pipeline for local talent.
 - To become the largest dance arts festival in the world.
 - To increase international arts tourism and inward investment in the arts

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What to Expect

- Picture a vibrant, metropolitan festival similar to the Edinburgh Fringe, but with a predominant focus on the world of dance, physical theatre, and musicals.
- All dance genres will be embraced.
- To encompass a diverse array of performances & activities throughout the town, spanning a wide spectrum of venues, from large theatres to intimate spaces & open-air, site-specific locations.
- An inclusive gathering offering opportunities not only for aspiring dancers, but also for renowned, international artists to showcase & share their talent.
- Ticketed live performances “works-in-progress” dance shows, musicals, physical theatre & contemporary circus.
- Workshops led by dancers, choreographers & dance companies.
- Dancing in the Streets programme (free performances in public spaces).
- Social dances & balls - Northern Soul, Salsa Parties, Tea Dances & Street Dance battle nights.
- Dance weekends with accommodation providers.
- Dance galleries, exhibitions, dance-related talks with The Hive Art Gallery & Showtown.
- Dance competitions.
- Online streaming platform promoting dance activity in Blackpool & a dedicated website promoting all dance related events in resort throughout the year.

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