



WOMEN UNSCENE

COMMUNITY THEATRE PROJECT



Our impact

The Women Unscene Community Theatre Group has been running projects since it began in 2018. We have supported over 100 women locally in Epping and London. All of our members have reported back saying that they have developed confidence and have gained a positive outlook on life. We have brought together women from different social and ethnic groups and successfully broken-down barriers of language and let ways of overcoming cultural indifferences and gained a sense of respect, tolerance and friendship. We have built strong links with the Loughton Town Council and Loughton Library who have both continued to support the project every year since we began. Our audiences have continued to grow in size each year both in person and online. With each project, we focus upon developing and exploring new skills including puppetry, mask-making, oral storytelling, music and song, wordplay, and movement. We have supported local schools and parents by creating free educational resources and bringing classic stories to life for younger audiences.



"It was a fantastic project to be part of. Not only did I learn new artistic skills, but I made some new friends. Alfie is a diamond ensuring that everyone feels valued and involved." (Karen Stewart)

Lesley's Story

I have been a member of The Women Unscene for many years now. The group has become a vital and much-loved part of my life especially in recent times. I have had several health problems including with my mobility and sight, Yet, Alfie has continued to make the project accessible and fully inclusive. It has helped me to socialise, form strong friendships with lots of different people from different walks of life. I've learnt lots of new artistic skills and played lots of characters. My favourite being the little mole in our production of The Gruffalo. I also got to play the Storyteller in our play "Where the Wild Things are." I love taking part and it's helped me to remain active.



Supporting the community

The Women Unscene Project was commended upon during the Covid:19 lockdown for their quick adaptation to working online and for supporting the local and wider community. We ran workshops online via Zoom working with artists such as Lauren Gleison, the Puppet Soup Theatre Company and Jacob Anderson. We then created a series of audio plays such as James and the Giant Peach, The Gruffalo, The Three Billy Goats Gruff, The Enormous Crocodile and The Tale of Little Brown Mouse and shared these with the community via our website, YouTube and community Facebook pages. Many parents remarked upon how useful they were whilst homeschooling their children during lockdown. We were also commended upon by the British Institute for the Blind who also asked to use our audio plays to support their younger members.

Elsa's story

English is my second language, so I was very apprehensive in joining. But Alfie from the beginning made everything accessible. Taking part has bettered my English and I have made lots of friends. I like it how he connects and celebrates everyone's culture and brings it to life in our performances. I really enjoyed the Reluctant Dragon which was lots of fun doing. Specially making the masks and learning a rap! I also enjoyed the Inspirational women project where we brought to life stories of famous women from our different cultures.



"A vital resource for the local community which has continued to adapt itself and develop as a supportive and constant resource for its members and the community particularly in tackling the risk of loneliness and isolation". (Julieann Penn, Face to Face Manager, Loughton Library)

"As someone who struggles with English and my memory this project is like gold dust. It has given me confidence, friendship with others and helped bring me out of my shell. Without it I would surely be sitting at home rarely coming out." (Elsa, Participant)

Women Unscene Facts:

- We have welcomed over 100 members and created over ten different productions so far.
- Last year, our performance of The Gruffalo was viewed online over 2000 times!
- All of our members have said that they feel more confident and positive about life.
- Our audio plays have been commended upon by the British Institute for the Blind.
- We take pride in working alongside other community organisations locally and work with the Loughton Community Network, Loughton Voluntary Care, Epping Home Instead, local libraries, Loughton Council, Stage Write, Epping Council.
- We are constantly evolving and learning new theatre practices and skills.
- Our audiences have continued to grow each year.
- We have successfully developed opportunities to talk about issues affecting local women and how problems can be resolved positively.
- We have worked with several local artists including Lauren Gleison, Puppet Soup, Jacob Anderson, Luke Garner-Greene and the Essex Storytellers.



Ellie's Story:

I recently fled from an abusive relationship which left me in pieces. I was recommended the Women Unscene Project, and it couldn't have helped me anymore. The people were so supportive and a delight to work with. I formed new friendships and even performed on stage for the first time. Everyone was incredibly patient and non-judgemental. I've since left Loughton and got myself a new full-time job in London and moved into my own place. The Women Unscene gave me that confidence to rebuild my life.
THANK YOU!



"Since Covid I have struggled with both my physical and mental health. It has hit me hard, and I am also not getting any younger. My eyesight is poor in one eye, and I find it hard to balance myself. Alfie has been amazing. Making the workshops accessible, supporting me with transport and giving me this lifeline to stay connected with the group. I feel happy and valued and it gives me a great sense of achievement." (Lesley)

"This project has been an absolute joy! I've loved every moment of it."
(Nemonne, Participant)

Community Engagement:

We know that our work would not be as successful if it wasn't for the support which we receive locally. We are proud to have worked with some amazing people over the years including:

- Loughton Council
- Loughton Library
- Loughton Voluntary Care
- Stage Write
- Puppet Soup
- Jacob Anderson
- Essex Storytellers
- Age UK
- Loughton Royal British Legion
- Loughton Mums and dads network
- British Institute for the Blind
- Integration Support
- Epping Action Group
- Debden Library
- Epping Library
- Tesco's Bags for Life
- Arts Council, England
- Local Schools
- Loughton Parent Toddler Group
- Fathers Storytime (Loughton)
- ELOP
- Epping Home Instead

Volunteers Story

My name is Merlin and I'm Transgender. I have to admit that I was a little nervous about coming to help at the Women Unscene project. Only because I know that there can be a stigma attached to transgender people. I couldn't have been anymore wrong. Alfie and the team made me feel completely at ease and welcome from the moment I arrived. I have really enjoyed every opportunity which I have been given. The Women Unscene project is such a unique, special project that creates little miracles and achieves so much with so little resources. Alfie supported me as an emerging artist showing me how to plan effective workshops taking into consideration inclusivity, accessibility and differentiation. He allowed me to grow as an artist giving me the freedom to try out (and often fail) new activities and ideas and to learn with judgement. The group are friendly, supportive and always open to learn new skills. We all get stuck in create beautiful shows!