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# STRICTLY CUBAN SALSA

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## INTRODUCTION

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The aim of the “Strictly Cuban Salsa” project which was run as 5 courses lasting 6 weeks each in villages within the area overseen by the Western CEF was to offer people who live in more rural areas or are isolated due to lack of access to a car or public transport an opportunity to engage and interact with others by providing workshops and classes in their area. In addition, our aim was to give people access to a way to improve their physical health but also do so in a fun way through learning to dance while listening to music.

A total amount of £1,500 was provided by the Western CEF towards the project and it was agreed that any additional finances would be raised through charging students a small fee for classes.

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## PROJECT DETAILS

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5 courses were run in the following villages over the 2017/18 period: Monk Fryston, Sherburn In Elmet, Burton Salmon and Fairburn. In each case, an effort was made to use local community venues such as community centres and village halls which were accessible to the wider public and known to people in the local area.

The 6 week courses were advertised on social media as well as local newsletters and through local contacts provided and in some cases by active advertisements e.g. performances at Fairburn village café, flyering in the local area. Emphasis was made on the fact that no partner or any dance experience was required to join in, and that there was no age limit to learning to dance Cuban salsa.

Participants in the course were charged £3 per session or £2 for students or those <20 years old and paid at the beginning of each class which allowed people to pay a “drop-in” price every week and allowed new

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students to join in even if they had missed a week or two at the beginning of the course.

The 6 week course was designed to take each student from being a novice to a level where they could dance comfortably socially.

In each course, 2 instructors were provided in order to be able to give participants a better learning experience and to allow the class to be divided in to 2 groups if necessary so that it was possible to allow certain students to go over moves slower.

### **Monk Fryston**

**Course dates: 27/09/2017- 01/11/2017**

This was our first 6 week course and we had interest from both the local villagers as well as some students who travelled from neighbouring areas such as Hambleton. The emphasis of the class was to provide a new activity to the community that was accessible to everyone and we were happy that we had a lot of young mothers from the area who attended and also brought along their children/infants to the class. They mentioned that there were few dance classes which they could attend either with their children or while their children were away in school so being able to attend a class at their local community centre during the day was ideal for them.

Following the success of the first 6 week course in Monk Fryston, we decided to continue classes at the community centre weekly as there was interest from the students who had come for the course, as well as some new people from the area who had missed the start date of the course but had been looking for an activity in the area. We had a meeting with our advisor Mr. Chris Hailey-Norris to discuss our plan and the logistics of continuing our project in Monk Fryston. In our meeting we discussed offering another 6 week course in Monk Fryston to allow a further intake of students who would be able to try out the classes. We agreed on a suitable period for this with the venue but also decided to continue running the Monk Fryston classes every week till the next 6 week block started as our students were keen to continue these classes in the meanwhile.





This was another point that was discussed in our meeting with Mr. Chris Hailey-Norris as the weekly classes would not be subsidized and therefore we agreed to increase the price of the class to £5 drop-in until the next 6 week block (and to continue to allow accompanied children to participate for free). The increase in price was necessary to cover the cost of teachers and venue charge.

**Course dates (second 6 week course): 7/03/2018- 11/04/2018**

We had a large new intake of students join us for this 6 week block as well as the students we had from the previous 6 week course. Some students had certain injuries and had been conscious about participating in evening dance classes but were reassured by the fact that our course was advertised for everyone with no age limit. We were able to provide different moves and certain tips about dancing in order to be able to incorporate everyone in to the class and the availability of two teachers greatly helped in this aspect.

**Sherburn In Elmet**

**Course dates: 12/02/2018- 12/03/2018**

We had students attend both from the local area and those who travelled from neighbouring villages. The age range of students varied from between late 30's and over 60's but everyone was happy to interact and dance with each other.

**Burton Salmon**

**Course dates: 14/03/2018- 18/04/2018**

Attendance was variable in this 6 week course as the students who were local to the area had other commitments on Wednesdays and were not able to attend consistently through the 6 week course. However, those who came regularly started to attend our weekly Monk Fryston classes following the completion of the 6 week course in Burton Salmon.





## **Fairburn**

**Course dates: 20/04/2018- 25/05/2018**

We had quite a few students join us who had seen us perform at/ heard about us at the Fairburn Café which is another local community project run in the area. Most students were 50+ and were looking for an activity which would help keep them fit and also help with body movement as opposed to more high intensity activities such as cardio.

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## PROJECT SUMMARY

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Running a set of 5 projects in villages within the Western CEF allowed local community members to participate in a new activity which has not been offered in the region before and engage people from a wide age range. We received a lot of positive feedback from students, especially students who were older who mentioned that they had always wanted to learn to dance but could not find any dance classes in the region which were suitable for older people and which they could get to within a reasonable distance from where they lived. All of our students were impressed at how much of a work out they got through the dance classes, even at a beginner level and even those with certain pre-existing injuries were able to participate fully in our classes.

We believed when starting this project that Cuban salsa would be an ideal activity for people in the region not only because of the various health benefits but because it has so many aspects which helps to engage students and to break down barriers between people even in the very first class. Although many of our students had differing backgrounds and various levels of dance experience, people were happy to help each other learn and were able to foster friendships.

By using local community venues we were able to make use of facilities which were familiar to those in the region and also help to support local associations in the area. Many of the venues were also run as not for

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profit organisations including the community centres and village halls and had extremely good facilities.

The expenses for which the funding was used were exclusively items that were stated in the original fund application and agreed upon with the Western CEF. These were a charge for designing marketing material, the venue charges incurred and a charge to fund the setup of the project for 2 dance instructors to travel to the various sites during the project providing Cuban salsa lessons as well as equipment and music and being fully trained and insured for this purpose.

The funding received from the Western CEF was used to cover the expenses from the project as detailed in the attached budget and any shortfall in covering costs including venue costs, dance instructor costs or advertising was made up partly from the drop in class prices but also from funds the C.I.C. obtained by offering further classes in the region.

