



Movement to Music

Dance-based classes for the Over 60s

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1. Introduction

Imagination Dance CIC was founded in 2018 to provide dance opportunities for those who are rarely offered them.

We regularly work in the community, providing sessions for older people; those with long-term conditions such as Dementia and Parkinson's; children and adults with learning and/or physical disabilities; and many more! As well as hosting our own timetable of classes, we provide bespoke sessions within care homes; adult day services; schools; Dementia support groups; and other organisations.



Our **Movement to Music** programme started in 2018 as a way of **keeping Over 60s active** in a gentle way. All of these classes are dance-based, focusing on **mobility, co-ordination and balance**. We explore all different styles of dance and end each class with social time. For us, **improving mental well-being** is just as important as improving physical health!

Example lesson plan

Warm up head to toe	5 mins	- Head to toe warm up – stretches etc	A Little Bit Of Love – Tom Grennan
Warm up cardio	5 mins	- Cardio warm up – marches, heel digs, grapevines, side taps, step claps, etc!	Dancing in the Moonlight – Toploader
Balance exercises	15 mins	Feet in parallel (holding chairs in front if necessary) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demi plie, rise x2 - Demi plie straight to rise (no break) x2 - Foot to ankle, to knee, ankle, down x2 - Releve, brings arms up to 5th and hold, and down Repeat in 1 st position (holding chairs in front if necessary)	These Days – Take That
		Feet in parallel (holding chair on side if necessary) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Point R foot forward then lift & tap x4 (keeping leg straight, toes pointed) - Repeat on L foot forward - Point R foot back then lift & tap x4 (keeping leg straight, toes pointed) - Repeat on L foot backwards - Point R foot forward then lift and hold x8 (bringing arms to 2nd/5th if they can) - Repeat on L forward - Point R foot backward then lift and hold (x8) (bringing arms to 2nd/5th if they can) - Repeat on L backward 	Happiness - McFly
Routine	15 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shadow step x2 - Slide to R, slide to L - Twisting! - REPEAT - Clicks in corners, roll the arms forward x2 backward x2 - Repeat verse - Clicks in corners, roll the arms forward x2, backward x2 - Walk into long line x8 - Step together step together opposite ways - Face the opposing line - Twist! - R leg points forward, back, forwards, in - Repeat on L leg - Boogie back to space - Repeat verse and clicks in corners section - Big pose! 	Twistin' The Night Away – Sam Cooke
Cool down	5 mins	- Head to toe cool down - stretches	Happy Instrumental Playlist

Our warm up consists of **static and dynamic stretches**, as well as a **cardiovascular section**. It is important we do a thorough warm up for our participants **to avoid any injuries, increase our heart rate** and to **ensure our mind and bodies are focused** for the rest of the class. It also gives a chance for our teachers **to visually assess how everyone is moving** in the class that day.

After our warm up, we often move into a **technique section** of the class where we focus on elements such as **balance; co-ordination; flexibility and strength**. We may develop these exercises over a **number weeks**, adding to them or making them more challenging depending on the group. The exercises we do in this section are often ones that participants can take away from the class and do in their own time, and will be **exercises that help with movement in their day-to-day lives**.

We work on a **routine over a number of weeks** in our classes. The **style of dance can vary** - we have covered everything from ballet, to musical theatre, even a bit of street dance! Often, we will liaise with our participants to see if there **are any particular styles of dance** they want to try or songs that they want to dance to. This is often **the section of the class enjoyed most** by participants!

Our cool down section is **equally as important as the rest of the class** as we need to **lower our heart rate, stretch our muscles and return our breathing rate to normal**. It also gives our participants a chance to **reflect on the class and relax their minds** to some calming and slower music.



Social time

Our Movement to Music classes always finish with approximately 15 minutes of social time which includes tea, coffee and biscuits! This gives our participants the opportunity to catch up and check in with each other. Whether it's discussing how the week was for everyone, challenges within the class itself, or even sharing things they may have been struggling with in their personal lives, our classes form a support network which is vital for our participants.

“Friendly, helpful, kind, thoughtful”

Our participants often meet up outside of our class time - either regularly for a coffee, or for special events such as Birthdays or Christmas. It is wonderful to see how friendships form between participants that go beyond purely sharing the same Movement to Music class.



2. Class Timetable

Movement to Music

Dance-based classes focusing on co-ordination, strength, flexibility and balance for older adults

Monday

Online, via Zoom | 11.30am

Sharnbrook Village Hall, Sharnbrook | 1pm

The Village Hall, Standon | 1.30pm

Tuesday

St Andrew's Church Hall, Langford | 11am

Fairfield Community Centre, Fairfield | 12.45pm

Wednesday

Northill Church Hall, Northill | 9am

Westoning Village Hall, Westoning | 11.45am

Thursday

Nigel Poulton Community Hall, Watton-at-Stone | 1.30pm

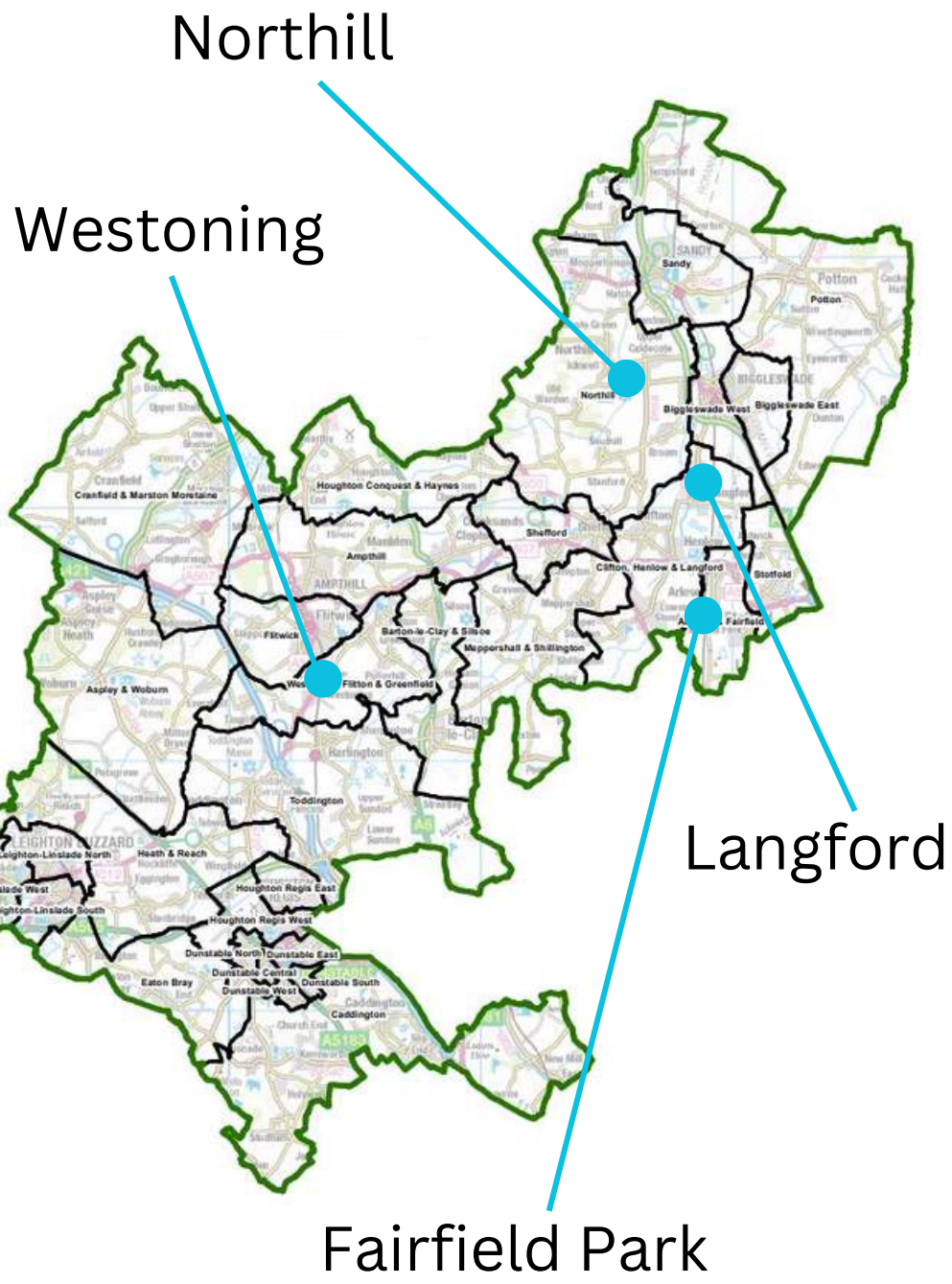


Imagination Dance
Community Interest Company

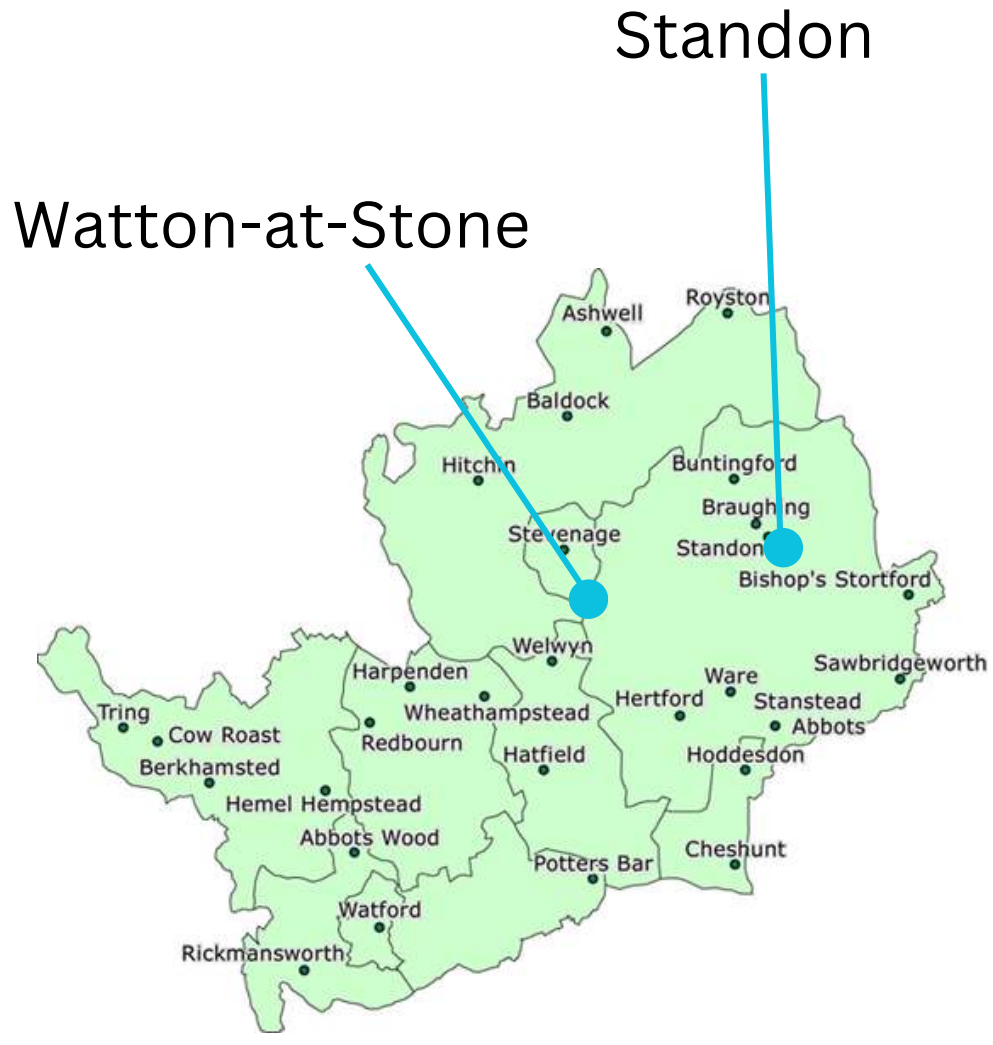
Register now:

info.imaginationarts@yahoo.com | 07394 934911

Central Bedfordshire



Hertfordshire



Classes are also held in **Sharnbrook** in *Bedford Borough* and **Online** via *Zoom*.

3. Research

"We're always told being active is the **secret ingredient to health and happiness**, and it can help us reduce the risk of everything from cancer to heart disease."

Age UK website

30 minutes of moderate physical activity per day is recommended for adults Over 60

Research has now shown that it is proven that **being active when you are older is even more important than being active earlier in life**. Our strength and mobility starts to decline as we get older, with our muscles and bones weakening and our stamina decreasing. **Regular, moderate physical activity can improve mood, prevent health conditions and give us more energy.**

Older Adults and Falls

Due to the ageing process, older people are **more vulnerable to falls**

1 in 3 adults over the age of 65 will have a fall at least once a year

50% of adults over 80 will have a fall at least once a year

Staying active is the most proven way to prevent falls in older adults.

Exercises that aim to improve balance, co-ordination and posture will help with falls prevention, along with building muscle strength and endurance.

Physical activity may also support preventing health conditions that may lead to more frequent falls - such as heart disease and Dementia.



Benefits of dance-based exercise

- Improved muscular strength and endurance
- Improved aerobic fitness and cardiovascular health
- Stronger bones and reduced risk of osteoporosis
- Improved co-ordination and agility
- Improved balance and posture
- Improved range of motion and flexibility
- Reduced risk of long-term health conditions such as Dementia, Cancer, Heart Disease, etc
- Improved confidence

18.6% of the population is aged 65+

(England & Wales, 2021)

The population of Over 65s has increased by 2.2% in 10 years

(England & Wales, 2021)

Around 40% of Over 65s have a limiting long-term illness or disability

“Not only keeps you fit, but keeps your mind and memory sharp!”

4. Feedback

Monitoring based on **25** responses from participants

Surveys completed between 2021 - 2023

72% of participants said our classes were **extremely beneficial** in improving their **co-ordination skills, core strength and balance**

28% agreed they were fairly beneficial

84% of participants said our classes were **extremely beneficial** in improving their **mental well-being**

16% agreed they were fairly beneficial

100% of participants said they would **recommend our Movement to Music**

classes to a friend



"We all have a fun time with Hannah motivating us in a lovely friendly and enjoyable way."

"Feels like a good workout without being too strenuous!"

"Super social classes, everyone made to feel very welcome. Love it!"

"Olivia is a lovely instructor, does a good, well-balanced class, puts it over with a sense of fun"

"Lots of variety so interest is maintained"

Case Study 1: Maureen Edwards

Maureen was one of our first participants at our Langford class when we started in August 2018. She had just moved into the village and stated how she “didn’t know a soul!” Since joining, Maureen has seen a **huge improvement in her social life**, as she now “**has lots of friends...the teacher included**”, and that the classes give her the opportunity to “**talk to people you wouldn’t do so normally**”.

Maureen says that it is “**something to get out of bed for**” and that from attending our classes, her social life and mental health has improved significantly. In terms of physical benefits from our class, Maureen says that the class has kept her **feeling supple and more energised**, as well as **improving her memory and working on her co-ordination skills**. From week-to-week, Maureen says that the stretches and exercises within the class means her “**muscles work better**” and she has felt an **overall benefit in how her body moves**.



“I love it! Perfect for those who want to get out and move!”

Case Study 2: Vivienne Gayer

“Always options for different levels of ability, there is nobody who couldn’t join!”



Vivienne has been attending our Westoning class since it started in May 2019. Since first joining our class, Vivienne has seen many **benefits in both her physical and mental health**. She states that she has seen an improvement in her “**physical strength, flexibility, balance and cardiovascular endurance**”. Vivienne expresses the difference she feels, especially in her balance and flexibility – stating that she finds it much **easier to move her body** with more ease and less pain!

Vivienne also says that she has benefitted socially as well as physically from attending the class. She states how the class has **allowed her to form friendships with other participants**, and also Leanne (the teacher), which means she comes away from the class “**feeling positive, energised and uplifted**”. Vivienne states that Leanne is very caring as a teacher and always asks how everybody is, making her feel “**part of something**” and **giving her a “boost”!**

5. Conclusion

Our Movement to Music classes continue to be popular, and the feedback from our participants is always positive.

Often, our participants have previously attended some sort of exercise class but have started to struggle with the impact, length or style of class. As we know, keeping active is extremely important for Over 60s and our class offers the chance to keep moving without the intensity of a Keep Fit class. Our classes are also enjoyed by those who love music, as we use a mixture of genres and eras to ensure there is something for everyone!

We can conclude from our research that our Movement to Music classes are beneficial for not only our participant's physical health, but also their mental and social wellbeing. We try to ensure that everyone is made to feel welcome, and to encourage those who are less mobile to feel as though they can do things, rather than isolating them from those who are more active. We always offer alternatives for different levels of mobility, and often include seated exercises as well exercises that involve standing.

Moving forward, we would love to expand our Movement to Music classes into new locations and reach further participants. Currently, 50% of our classes run in Central Bedfordshire, 25% in Hertfordshire, 12.5% in Bedford Borough and 12.5% online. Increasing our offer in Hertfordshire is a primary aim for us in the near future. We have trialled classes in areas such as Buntingford (East Herts) and Knebworth (nr. Stevenage) but with less popularity than we had anticipated and so unfortunately those classes had to fold. Prior to opening our next class in Hertfordshire, we will partake in our market research to see if there is a demand for this sort of class, and to see whether there are any similar style classes running in the area and if so, to what success.



6. References

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All information correct as of April 2024.

