

## Evaluation of the Magic Course

### SUMMARY

#### Background

Solva Care started in 2015 as a community-development project, now a registered charity, centring on social support and wellbeing activities run at local level. The Magic Project ran for eight weeks in the summer of 2019 (11 June – 30 July), by Solva's local Magician Tom Thumb (Luddington) – a member of the Magic Circle. The course was held in the local football club and participants were asked to pay a small contribution towards their 'Magic Box' to encourage commitment.

#### Project Objectives

This was one of the first intergenerational projects, involving children, set up by Solva Care and it was open to up to 12 people of any age (minimum 11 years), and it was fully subscribed.

The project aimed to demonstrate wellbeing outcomes amongst participants from the community. The aims of the project were to:

- ❑ Bring the generations together in an enjoyable and exciting social activity.
- ❑ Enhance the wellbeing of participants and increase their confidence, self-esteem, hand-eye coordination/ dexterity, memory skills and enjoyment.
- ❑ Improve the participants' interest in community activities.
- ❑ Develop existing skills and learn new skills.
- ❑ Extend the participants' social connections and connectivity, in particular between generations.

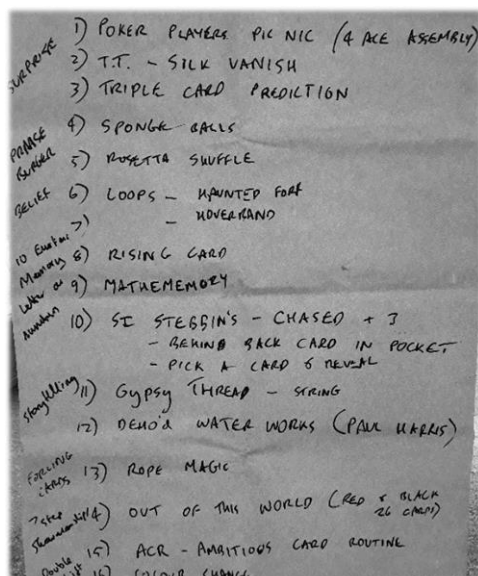
Another outcome of the project was to give the participants the opportunity to perform with Tom at an event in the village.

#### Course Programme

##### Recap at lesson 8

(also see Appendix 1)

##### Tom Thumb



## Tools and Methods

The evaluation was based on the following methods:

- ② A questionnaire completed by all the participants at the end of the course, making the overall response rate 100%.

## Outcomes

The age range of participants was from 11 – 82, with half of the participants being between 11 and 20. All respondents reported gaining high levels of enjoyment from the project, whilst 7 participants reported gaining a greater sense of dexterity. The majority, 10 people, said they had increased their skills and 8 respondents reported that the sessions had enabled them to make new connections with people (one person knew everyone already). More than half, 7 participants, said that they would like to do more courses and were interested in attending further community activities (and a further 3 said 'maybe').

## Conclusion

The participants in the classes reported an improved sense of wellbeing. They had learnt new skills or reinforced those that they already possessed. New social connections across the ages were also facilitated by the course. The study did not undertake a pre-survey, nor verify the self-reports. Nevertheless, we can conclude that it was successful overall in meeting its objectives.



*"Tom amazed us with his skill of deception, intrigue and carefully orchestrated patter, posture, and attitude. ....establishing empathetic relationships as well as audience involvement and participation.*

*From the first week each person was encouraged to develop at their own rate and ability.*

*Further sessions centred mainly on developing memory strategies for life. Tom used story telling techniques in which to elaborate the art of 'magic'.*

*He also provided a recipe for creating confidence by talking about sustaining a positive belief in oneself, useful devices for interview techniques and other life skills."*

*(The above are comments from one of the adult participants)*

**The information in the following section is from the questionnaires.**

### **Participation**

Only 3 of the respondents had taken part in an arts project previously. 8 participants attended all or most (6-8) of the sessions.

### **Attendance**

3 people said that they had problems attending. Of those, the most common reason was previously arranged commitments (holidays, school and work).

### **Outcomes**

The following outcomes are scored on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest score to 5 being the highest.

### **Enjoyment**

100% of respondents had gained high levels of enjoyment from the project, scoring 4 or 5.

### **Confidence in Engaging in Community Activities**

7 respondents had gained confidence from participating in the project, scoring 4 or 5. One lower score came from a person who said that confidence 'has not been a problem for me'.

### **Dexterity**

7 participants had improved their dexterity, scoring 4 or 5.

### **New Connections**

8 participants reported that the sessions had enabled them to make new connections with people (1 person knew everyone already).

There was a comment from one participant who reported that it was 'Great fun to engage with different backgrounds/age groups.'

### **Happiness**

All respondents reported an increased sense of happiness, scoring 4 or 5.

### **Skills**

10 respondents felt that the project had increased their skills, whilst 2 were not sure (one of those had only attended 3 sessions).

Respondents were invited to comment on their developed skills. Several said they felt more confident, others that their hand-eye coordination had improved, and some commented on increase in dexterity and increased life skills.

## **Future Participation**

### **Future Participation in Similar Courses**

8 respondents reported that the project had affected their interest in attending further similar courses, with a further 3 saying 'maybe'.

Respondents were invited to comment further:

*'Yes because I enjoy them and I learn new things on every course'.*

*'Because it would be fun'.*

*'Would enjoy attending similar courses'.*

*'Confidence building. Social skills, job interview skills, communication skills all improved'.*

*'I would like to join a misdirection club or something'.*

### **Future Participation in Community or Arts Activities**

Four respondents would be interested in attending further Arts activities. Half of them, 6, said they were already interested. Seven of the participants would be interested in attending future Community activities in general and 3 said 'maybe'.

## **Other Outcomes**

Participants were also encouraged to share views or suggestions. Some are recorded below:

*'Fantastic. What an opportunity. Thank you Tom – Thank you Solva Care*

*'It was great'.*

*'Great sessions. REALLY INSPIRING.*

*'It was all good'*

*'Tom is a brilliant magician and would love to do this sort of thing again'.*

*'It was a lot of fun!'*

Course outline prepared by Tom Luddington

Website: [www.seriouslygoodmagic.com](http://www.seriouslygoodmagic.com)



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### **Solva 8 week Magic Course 2019**

**Starting 11th June 5pm - 7pm, then every Tuesday at football club, 5pm - 7pm for 8 weeks total.**

Magic is a performance art, and learning a little magic can bring many benefits - in addition to it being great fun.

Following is an outline for the 8-week magic course (2 hrs coaching per week) and a list of suggested resources and associated costs.

The intention of the Magic show and course in brief is to give students the opportunity to increase their confidence, skills, memory and social interaction through magic. Magic coaching will be delivered by Tom Luddington in a relaxed workshop environment in Solva with the emphasis on fun and positivity.

Professor Richard Wiseman and Caroline Watt wrote a research paper "Achieving the Impossible: a review of magic based interventions and their effects on wellbeing":

*"Wiseman and Watt's study identified the benefits of Magic in that it promotes in short, 'thinking'. They state how magicians, medics, educators, psychologists and occupational therapists have described a wide range of benefits that can flow from learning to perform magic tricks including: Lateral thinking and problem solving; Fostering trust; Storytelling and imagination; Practical skills; Cognitive skills; Motor skills; Teamwork; Interpersonal communication; Adaptability and resilience along with wellbeing, self-esteem and confidence."*

### **Seriously Good Magic - a background.**

Seriously Good Magic is a Pembrokeshire based business providing magic as performance art, magic as entertainment and magic workshops and events run by Tom Luddington. Tom is a full-time magician and Member of The Magic Circle in London. Tom has £10m public liability insurance with Equity and has recently completed an enhanced disclosure for his coaching work with people. Seriously Good Magic uses magic to demonstrate the real magic of nature that surrounds us all and remind people of the true wonders of life. Tom has experience teaching people of all ages, and working with people with mental and physical disabilities, and is motivated to help others to live their best possible lives.

Each participant will need their own collection of magic props to complete the course as outlined above. These props will be theirs to keep after the course.

The course content will of course be subject to change depending on the interests of the participants and their progress through the course. The emphasis on the course for the participants will be a relaxing and fun time using magic to learn new skills and develop confidence.

Tom Luddington MMC



Timings and Activity:

Date & Time	Activity	Outcomes
<b>Week 1</b>  5pm - 7pm	<p>An introduction to the performance art of magic. How to learn magic, and why people love to see magic. Topics covered will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What magic can do for you</li> <li>• Magic as metaphor</li> <li>• The 'rules' of magic and why they exist</li> <li>• Story Telling</li> <li>• S.U.R.P.R.I.S.E. (How to Learn great Magic)</li> <li>• Feeling ACE - The science on how to be more confident.</li> <li>• The importance of practice, and how to practice.</li> </ul> <p>Participants will be given a box of tricks that will be theirs to keep and use for the duration of the course. (See table below for a list of suggested contents of the box.)</p> <p>Week 1 Tricks: A Poker Players Picnic (Cards), Triple Card Prediction (cards) &amp; Silk Vanish.</p> <p>Overhand shuffle. Card control. The One ahead principle. Structure of the script.</p>	<p>Day one is a chance for everyone to get to know Tom, and for participants to share what they would like to get from the course as well as hear what the course will aim to cover and what can be expected. Participants will learn that great magic can actually be very easy, but that there is a process to follow after learning the secrets to create a good performance of even the simplest of tricks. Likely outcomes will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Fun &amp; practical afternoon</li> <li>• Increased belief in ability to learn new things</li> <li>• Increased Confidence to speak up in front of others</li> <li>• Trusting others</li> <li>• Improved Physical skills with props, playing cards and silk</li> <li>• Be able to understand the process of learning and performing great magic</li> <li>• Learn the secrets of three magic tricks.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 2</b>  5pm - 7pm	<p>Revision of week one. Introductory workshop on performance skills. Maximising your ability to be confident.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Week 1 Tricks</li> <li>• Introduction to Sponge Ball Magic</li> <li>• Misdirection - the masterclass</li> <li>• Further techniques with Cards</li> <li>• Scripting and choreography of Magic</li> </ul> <p>Perform your first magic trick: Learning to how fail (whilst being kind to oneself!) so that you can progress super fast.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gaining confidence</li> <li>• Learning how to direct attention and keep peoples focus where you want it</li> <li>• Motor skills - improved hand eye coordination</li> <li>• Using and developing imagination</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> <li>• Skill acquisition</li> <li>• Practice techniques</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3</b>  5pm - 7pm	<p>Levitating objects. Telekinesis and Invisible Touch.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Loops</li> <li>• Handling and Lighting</li> <li>• Storytelling and communication skills</li> <li>• The Haunted Fork</li> <li>• Hovering Band</li> <li>• Invisible Touch</li> </ul> <p>Free practice session to work on any tricks learned so far in weeks 1 &amp; 2.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Storytelling</li> <li>• Scripting</li> <li>• Communication Skills</li> <li>• Adaptability</li> <li>• Improved performances</li> <li>• Voice skills</li> <li>• Theatre techniques</li> <li>• Improvisation</li> <li>• Giving and receiving feedback</li> </ul>

	Perform a trick informally to one person.	
<b>Week 4</b>  5pm - 7pm	Review of weeks 1 – 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Memory Techniques - 10 Emotions of Power</li> <li>• Creating a positive inner voice</li> <li>• Numbers as letters - The Magic Square</li> <li>• Memory Magic</li> </ul> Time to practice tricks learned so far. Practice performing tricks one to one, and for a small group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved Memory</li> <li>• Mathematical Magic</li> <li>• The importance of positivity routines for well being</li> <li>• Learn the 10 emotions of power.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 5</b>  5pm - 7pm	Magic with Water - Hydrostatic Glass (tbc) Magic with thread - The Art of Storytelling. Revision of previous weeks tricks and sleights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Storytelling</li> <li>• Innovation</li> <li>• Creativity</li> <li>• Improved fine Motor skills</li> <li>• Confidence Increasing</li> </ul>
<b>Week 6</b>  5pm - 7pm	Mentalism - and introduction to simple and easy mind reading magic. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Billets - ball switch and adding a billet</li> <li>• Shiner</li> <li>• Forcing objects (magicians choice &amp; forcing cards)</li> <li>• Using Comedy in Magic</li> <li>• Goal setting</li> <li>• Leadership techniques that are used by magicians.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adding comedy into your magic</li> <li>• Sharing the joy of magic with others</li> <li>• Effective Goal setting</li> <li>• Leadership tricks</li> <li>• Basic Acting skills</li> </ul>
<b>Week 7</b>  5pm - 7pm	Your favourite trick/s Creating your first routine (more than one trick one after the other). Music and Magic Taking it from practice to rehearsal. 7 Steps to successful showmanship. Creating the right performance environment. Pre-show prep Sharing your magic with a group of people. Top tips.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creativity</li> <li>• Innovation</li> <li>• Skill development</li> <li>• Story telling</li> <li>• Increased confidence</li> </ul>
<b>Week 8</b>  5pm - 7pm	Prep for the end of course show. Rehearsals. 'Nice and nervous'.  Each attendee performs one or two of their favourite tricks as planned for other members / group  "My 1 minute of magic! The Show".  One to one feedback sessions between participants & Tom to identify progress and next steps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overcoming fears</li> <li>• Leaving the comfort zone</li> <li>• Focussing on the positive</li> <li>• Sharing new skills</li> <li>• Practice of real performance</li> <li>• Teamwork</li> <li>• Supporting and encouraging others.</li> <li>• Celebrating success</li> <li>• Planning ahead</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 2

### Evaluation of the 8-week Magic Course June-July 2019

*We would like to see whether the Magic Course has been successful in connecting people in the community and if participation has contributed to their sense wellbeing. Please spend a few minutes completing this form. There is no need to give your name unless you want to. The information you give will be anonymised.*

1. Have you ever taken part in anything similar before this course? *(please tick one box)*

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Not sure

2. How many sessions of the Magic course did you attend? *(please circle one answer)*

8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

3. If you had problem attending, please write why in the space below:

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**4. ENJOYMENT**

On a scale of 1 (not enjoyed at all) to 5 (enjoyed it very much), to what extent did you enjoy the Magic Course, if at all? *(please circle one number)*

1 2 3 4 5

**5. CONFIDENCE IN ENGAGING IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES**

On a scale of 1 (made you a lot less confident) to 5 (definitely made you a lot more confident) how did the Magic Course affect your confidence, if at all? *(please circle one number)*

1 2 3 4 5

**6. DEXTERITY (skill in performing tasks, especially with the hand)**

On a scale of 1 (made me feel a lot less dexterous) to 5 (definitely made me feel more dexterous) to what extent did the Magic Course affect your sense of dexterity, if at all? *(please circle one number)*

1 2 3 4 5

7. Has attending the Magic Course enabled you to make new connections with people? *(please tick one box)*

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Not sure



## HAPPINESS

On a scale of 1 (made you feel a lot less happy) to 5 (definitely made me feel happy) how as the Magic Course affected your sense of happiness, if at all? *(please circle one number)*

1 2 3 4 5

8. Do you feel that the course has increased your skills? *(please circle your preferred answer)*

Yes

No

Not sure

If you replied yes to Q9, please write below the way in which you feel your skills have been increased:

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9. Did the course affect your interest in attending arts activities? *(please tick one box)*

☐ Yes, it has affected my interest

☐ No, it has not affected my interest

☐ No, because I was already interested

10. Did the course affect your interest in attending community activities? *(please tick one box)*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ A little

11. Would you like to be involved in more courses of this type? *(please circle your preferred answer)*

Yes

No

Maybe

If your answer was yes or maybe to Q12 please give more details in the space below:

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Your age *(please circle)*

13-19 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60-69 70-79 80-89

Please write any other comments or suggestions, below:

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**THANK YOU for filling out this questionnaire.**

## APPENDIX 3

### Steve Higgins, HUTS Community Group, Newcastle Emlyn (May 2019)

Professor Richard Wiseman and Caroline Watt, have written a research paper “Achieving the impossible: a review of magic-based interventions and their effects on wellbeing”. In the paper they review research work on the benefits of magic for well-being and conclude that it is generally beneficial.

Their research identified that magic was used in the First World War in a work by Charles Folkard entitled ‘Tricks For The Trenches And Wards’, a book that encouraged convalescing soldiers to perform magic tricks as a form of entertainment and rehabilitation. Similarly, in the Second World War a magician and psychiatrist Douglas Kelley published a lengthy article describing how he had successfully used magic tricks as a form of occupational therapy at the New York State Psychiatric Institute and Hospital.

In the 1950s and 60s in the USA there existed a national committee for ‘Therapy through Magic’ which encouraged performers to team up with medics and to teach magic tricks to their patients. The initiative involved several well-known medical institutions, including the Mayo Clinic (Minnesota), the Bellevue Hospital (New York), and the Variety Children’s Hospital (Miami). In 1981, internationally renowned magician David Copperfield worked with Occupational Therapist Julie DeJean to create ‘Project Magic’. This program aimed to teach patients magic tricks to enhance their wellbeing, motivation, and self-esteem. The project was particularly focused on the physical aspects of Occupational Therapy but found that the benefits extended beyond the physical dexterity required for the tricks.

In 1988, American magician Kevin Spencer helped to create a similar program after himself being involved in a serious car accident and suffering head and spinal cord injuries. Spencer’s ‘Healing of Magic’ initiative involved magicians teaching simple magic tricks to promote patients’ physical and psychological wellbeing. Emulating ‘Project Magic’, Spencer produced a manual and DVD containing appropriate magic tricks and instructional material.

Wiseman and Watt also identified the educational benefits of Magic in that it promotes in short, ‘thinking’. They state how magicians, medics, educators, psychologists and occupational therapists have described a wide range of benefits that might flow from learning to perform magic tricks including : Lateral thinking and problem solving ; Fostering trust; Storytelling and imagination; Practical skills; Cognitive skills; Motor skills; Teamwork; Interpersonal communication; Adaptability and resilience along with; Self-esteem and confidence.

In respect of Physical and Psychological benefits Wiseman and Watt identify that there have been a number of studies published regarding how magic tricks can assist with the development of well-being.

One of the studies referred to a project in which a magician and two occupational therapists taught magic tricks to seven psychiatric patients with a variety of conditions (including schizophrenia, recurrent paranoid psychosis and bipolar affective disorder). The magic-based intervention consisted of eight 90-minute, sessions, delivered over a nine-week period. The tricks were chosen from Copperfield’s ‘Project Magic’ and aimed to enhance patients’ social skills. Six patients completed a questionnaire about the benefits of learning magic, with the results showing that they found the experience highly sociable, refreshing, pleasant and meaningful. Wiseman and Watt noted that the programme helped lend structure to large amounts of uncommitted time, and that a key part of its success involved discovering strengths rather than emphasising limitations. Using the same ‘Project Magic’ system with children it was found that their self-esteem was ‘significantly higher after the intervention.’

In another study it was also examined whether a magic-based intervention improved patients’ psychological wellbeing. Forty patients completed questionnaires designed to measure their happiness and general satisfaction (Personal Wellbeing Index) and self-confidence (Chinese General Self-Efficacy Scale). The researchers reported significant increases on the Personal Wellbeing Index and on just one item of the General Self-efficacy Scale (the capability to identify multiple solutions to a problem). Patients indicated that their cognitive skills (including memory, concentration and ability to think rationally) had improved, and that the intervention boosted their confidence and acted as a catalyst for conversation. Interestingly, the researchers also noted that the patients became more presentable during performance.

Another study examined the psychological impact of another magic based programme ‘Hocus Focus’ in three schools, involving a total of 9 teachers and 76 students (aged between 12 and 14). The students were diagnosed with a range of issues, including Autism, Emotional Behaviour Disorder, Learning Disability, ADHD, and Communication Difficulties. The teachers completed various observation checklists and surveys, and students completed both surveys and informal interviews.

Qualitative data indicated that the majority of the students experienced improvements. The teachers reported that the intervention captured and held students' attention, encouraged active participation, emphasised the importance of following directions, and encouraged students to help one another. The students appeared to show increases in concentration, and memory skills, self-determination and self-esteem, motivation and participation, leadership and socialisation, peer relationships and collaboration.

In another study semi-structured interviews were carried out with 29 parents of hemiplegic children who had undertaken a magic programme called The Breathe initiative. Three main benefits from the programme emerged: 'It's okay to be me' (parents believing that their children experienced a strong sense of inclusion and insight); 'the magic effect' (valuing the novelty and challenge of performing magic tricks) and; 'I can do it' (increased self-belief and a willingness to attempt challenging tasks). Overall, many parents believed that their children had gained a feeling of mastery, which had then helped them to develop a more autonomous approach to daily activities.

Wiseman and Watt do express reasons as to why caution should be taken with the findings regarding the benefit to well-being due to the various studies having: no control group; small numbers of self-selected participants; almost all of the studies involved participants facing physical and psychological challenges and the type of magic-based intervention employed. The various studies do however, show how the subjective experience for the participants is beneficial in increasing their well-being in various ways and as such I believe would be of benefit if developed within HUTS and/or Ni i Gyd/All of Us.

HUTS Members in their returned questionnaires of December 2018 expressed a desire to increase their self-confidence and self-esteem, particularly in social situations, all of which has been shown to be achievable using a magic based intervention as mentioned in the afore-mentioned studies. A magic based intervention, such as 'Project Magic' is in keeping with the people led, strengths based ethos of HUTS and I feel could be a solid initiative to assist in the wellbeing development of HUTS members as well as the prospective attendees at Ni i Gyd / All of Us. (The members proposed name of the 'Walk In'.)

I have searched for suitable magicians that may have an interest in such a project and as a result of this search I have established contact with Tom Luddington, [www.seriouslygoodmagic.com](http://www.seriouslygoodmagic.com), who is based in Solva. Tom and I have spoken on the phone and he has expressed an enthusiastic interest in being part of some sort of therapeutic magic programme at HUTS.

The idea that I am thinking of pursuing with Tom is of him attending HUTS, either at a dedicated Wellbeing afternoon or possibly for the re-opening of downstairs, to show people in attendance 'close up' magic. In the course of the afternoon it would also be announced that Tom is willing to assist people with learning some magic skills, the benefits the learning of such skills can bring and that a course would be starting on a given date.

I am hoping that the enthusiasm generated by the Wellbeing Afternoon experience would equally enthuse members towards agreeing to join an internal 'Project Magic' type course taking place over a number of weeks culminating in a show/performance within HUTS. If successful I would then ascertain the feasibility of the HUTS magic group going out into the community to entertain other groups. I am currently thinking that this performance aspect could particularly focus on groups and venues which are striving to combat community loneliness and difficulties relating to Alzheimers & Dementia. E.g. Old People's Homes, Coffee & Clonc and Maes Mwldan Tuesdays. This extension of going out into the community, particularly to the afore mentioned groups, combined with people doing things for other people is known to significantly boost one's own self-esteem and may result in a genuine win-win situation for all parties involved. In our conversation Tom mentioned how he was aware of the significant personal benefits that the act of performing along with the learning of how to perform can and does bring to people.

Tom himself has a personal understanding and experience of Mental Health issues and during our telephone conversation he mentioned how he would 'love to prevent anyone ending it or taking a wrong path' by having increased their personal self-esteem with magic. He has an awareness of how magic has been of benefit to people's wellbeing and has personally experienced this benefit himself. Tom is a full-time magician and it is his sole means of income so although willing to be flexible with his time his involvement would involve financial costs.

Tom is willing to visit HUTS to see what we do, get a feel for the place, meet me 'face to face' and discuss plans of how to proceed. He would be available to do this after 16th April 2019. We agreed that I would send him a general plan of what we were looking to do based upon the principles that the course would be to boost wellbeing skills for members which they could benefit from using in wider society with an intention then of giving something back to the wider community.

My outline plan/idea at present would be:

1. A magical wellbeing afternoon/ re-opening with Magician doing close up magic during the course of the afternoon which would include talk of the benefits of magic from a wellbeing viewpoint. A launch of the HUTS Magic Course.
2. A 6-8 week group course, following Magician's guidance where skills would be practiced, shared and learnt including ongoing evaluation/feedback in line with research guidelines.
3. At least one 'in-house' performance.
4. Establishing contact with other community groups and attending their events/venues to perform and bring the benefits to the wider community via the HUTS magic group.

My thoughts/questions are regarding this outline plan.

1. Can/ should we involve an aspect of 'educational' research into the project so that benefits can be quantified/monitored and if so should we look at involving some educational based research methods, can those with suitable backgrounds advise on this?
2. We design, with the assistance of the magician, a course which maximises the wellbeing development of those that undertake the course which would then be repeatable with others.
3. We gather all the relevant research/feedback information we can before/during/after the course in relation to BLF funding requirements.