

Learner survey report 2015.

Thanks so much, everyone who has completed the learner surveys. I've found out loads about what's important to you about clog dance classes and what you want to learn now.

This is a report to summarise the responses and to tell you what's going to happen now. I haven't copied any individual suggestions or feedback text - because I think some of you would rather keep those things to yourself - but all your feedback has been very useful and constructive and hopefully will help us to build an even better / stronger learning experience for you all.

You're all different and have different priorities but I will try, wherever I can to accommodate all your ideas and preferences. Some of this will be in the regular classes and some will be one-off sessions on a Tuesday or even the occasional extra workshop.

So, the scores on the doors, from your tick box feedback:

What's important to you about our clog dancing classes?	Score	Place	What's going to happen now:
Socialising	69	=1	Keep enjoying each other's company! :) And I won't be too strict about calling you to order.
Being part of a group	69	=1	We'll all keep the group going strong :)
Helping and supporting others	67	2	I am guessing that, as some of you didn't seem too confident with the wanting to facilitate small groups question, yet this was really high scoring, that some of you are referring to the social help and support that happens in our group - that's fantastic - it's brilliant that it's so important to you and what keeps our group so strong.
Having fun	65	3	Goes without saying, but I'm glad that it's important to so many of you because it is to me too. I won't turn into a clog teaching ogre therefore (phew!) and I'll make sure if we

			have other people in to facilitate groups that they know that fun is a priority.
Learning for the purposes of performing with the group	64	=4	This tells me that being part of a performing group and being confident at performing is more important than the fact that it's clog dancing we're performing. Noted. :)
Learning new steps	64	=4	I'll keep them coming! :)
Technical improvement	62	5	I'll try and keep a balance between those of you who want to keep a good pace of learning new things and those of you who want to refine and improve their steps :)
Dancing and performing as a way to build and keep self confidence	60	6	I know about this one - it's part of why I do it too :). I got some useful feedback that many of you like the style of encouragement and that many of you have done things you never thought you'd do so I'll keep that up and keep challenging you!
Learning clog dance as a way of keeping the brain active	58	7	There was quite a difference in the age profile of responses here. Not surprising, I guess, that the adults recognise the brain challenge of learning complex steps and rhythms and the childerbeast seem to not even notice that it's hard! But that's something I can keep in mind :). From the text feedback I can see that I need to not overload brains with too many difficult steps at one time. Give you time to consolidate. This should be easier to balance now, with the youth group having some separate classes.
Learning clog dancing as a way to keep fit	51	8	Again, there were some big differences here - some really see it as important and others not at all. So what I'll do is not go all fit-fiend on you all but I'll make sure we

			naturally get a good workout when we're learning.
Skills that can be used elsewhere	50	9	Some big differences again. Could be to do with different aspirations, time of life (again, the children are not that bothered about this one - perhaps they are full of skills through school). But there are plenty of opportunities for people to build their confidence in wider skills that I've built in for those who want them.
Learning clog dance	49	10	It's funny that this was one of the lowest scorers and it's a clog dance class! But that's really interesting. It's not that you're all clog geeks like me - some of you clearly just like learning something - or just love dancing and this is just a good opportunity to do that with a great bunch of mates. So that's important for me to remember.
The history of clog dancing	48	11	This was a sort of lukewarm response rather than loads of extremes - so that tells me that you want a bit of context but no lectures. :)

Really interesting responses - and thank you so much.

In terms of the preferred next dances, these are the scores:

Dance	Score	Place
Beginners - Ossie Jig	53	1
Beginners - hornpipe	51	=2
Beginners Waltz	51	=2

Beginners step build	49	3
Intermediate - French Canadian	57	1
Intermediate - Old Lancs B	54	2
Intermediate - going over tricky steps	53	3
Improvisation - Welsh	51	1
Improvisation - Westmorland	47	2
Improvisation - freestyle	46	3
Doing our own Waltz	54	1
Doing our own hornpipe	51	=2
Doing our own reel	51	=2
People who are happy to facilitate small groups	46	
People who'd like a posture workshop	50	1
People who'd like a dance-for-fitness workshop	48	2
People who'd like a creative dance workshop	41	3

What this tells me:

Beginners.

We'll start with the Ossie Jig and then we'll do a hornpipe, maybe in January.

Intermediate.

Though the French Canadian is clearly the top choice, I'm going to start us with another high scorer, the old lancs B. This is for 2 reasons. 1. The band have never played French Canadian style for us - and they might prefer a reel or to learn the new style first, so I need to consult with the band about this. 2. Some people started learning some of the Old Lancs B

steps at the workshops this weekend, so, rather than them forgetting those steps, we'll keep them going for this first part of the year. We'll do French Canadian in January. Or if you are really keen to learn it sooner, let me know and as soon as the band is ready I'll do a special workshop for you.

Improvisation.

The clear top choice is Welsh style but the scores weren't that high - so we'll just do a now and again improvisation class rather than doing it in a chunk and losing some of you who aren't that keen.

Our own dance.

You clearly love waltzing! Noted. Again, not massively high scores so I'll maybe bring this into improvising workshops and do the two things together.

Facilitating small groups.

Some of you are really happy to do this, others appear to not feel that comfortable or confident running the groups - which is great, because we can meet all needs this way. What we're going to do is a [BarCamp](#) approach, which is a great way of organising peer learning. I'll start this process off this week and we'll keep it going for a bit until everyone's helped to plan it and then we'll start some small group work based on refresher steps of the dances we know.

Workshops.

Some of you are very interested in posture and fitness, so I might combine the two as a special one-off workshop and then incorporate this into our warm ups.

Not many of you were that taken with the idea of a creative workshop. Shame, I was looking forward to leotards and leg warmers!! ;)

Summary of your text responses.

Thanks so much for your kind compliments and the constructiveness of your suggestions - I can take criticism you know- but you were all so polite!

Anyway, the suggestions have really helped.

Based on that, here's what's going to happen now:

- Young ones (12 and over young adults) are going to have the opportunity to learn in a pacier environment with Steph, who's kindly agreed to run sessions for them when she can. This will increase our repertoire as well as trimming down the group classes so I can make things a bit more learning-friendly for the under 12s and adults. I've spoken with most of our young people about how they want these sessions to run and here's the plan so far:
 - Facilitator must be cool and not parental or teacher-y in any way - so if it's not Steph for any reason, choose wisely, Hels.

- The learning space is for learning and not to be disrupted by anyone watching. So no spectators.
- When we're ready, we'll show what we've learned.
- We're happy to perform as a youth group too.
- I am going to make sure that, whenever I can, you can all see through to the front. Splitting off the younguns should help with that, but I'm also going to check more regularly that you're happy and can see. You don't always feel comfortable keep asking the front row to spread out so I'll help with that. I am also going to try teaching in reverse. No promises and I'll need your support and patience. Phil Howard is going to make me some clog flaps with L and R on them, that I can swap between feet which should help me.
- I'm going to make sure there's plenty of opportunity for you to consolidate your learning and I'll tell you if you aren't getting the steps quite right so that you have the chance to improve more and a bit more personal challenge.
- Catching up. Some of you really like that we have videos of steps that you can use to learn and practise at home. Some of you prefer to catch up in a class. Obviously, I have to try and get the balance right, because if people haven't attended a class or didn't join until part way through a dance, I can't hold everyone up while they catch up. So videos are the most popular way of dealing with this. But we'll also have catch-ups using the BarCamp approach and I'll make sure it's clear who's happy to help with learning, so you can self organise this peer to peer and help each other too.
- Some suggestions were for particular dances. I am afraid that I can't always offer to teach every single dance I know. That's because I need to feel comfortable about how this might be viewed by other dance sides in the clog dance community. I'm really sorry about that but if I'm not offering a dance it's either because I'm not confident enough with it to teach it yet or because I'm afraid it might cause friction with other sides. I really check very thoroughly to make sure we're not duplicating or using the same ideas / repertoire as other sides - and that goes for music choices too. So can I please ask you to understand that?
- There was a great idea to ask the band to have a go at clog dancing one time - I shall put it to them... ;)
- Your goals are quite specific and I'll do my best to help you achieve them. Some of you gave me music goals - I'm afraid I can't do that at the same time as clog classes but I'll pass them on to Tony for the band. The things I am going to do for everyone, because it came up a lot are:
 - Wanting to be REALLY confident with a particular dance. I will help you to be confident that you are DANCERS - we're all learners and we're all dancers. You would not believe the amount of self-led practise and learning I have to do to be confident enough to teach a step - running the classes is a massive part of how I learn and I know the difference between how it feels when dancing out when you're confident with a dance as opposed to not confident. Now I can give you feedback - notice and tune you in to your improvements - but the level of confidence some of you are seeking comes with hours of practise, so I strongly

encourage those of you with these goals to find yourself an extra hour a week to practise at home - it works wonders, believe me!

- Wanting to improve particular techniques like round shuffles or being on your toes, light on your feet, posture, etc. I am feeling great about this one because Harry Cowgill said he could tell we learn together and that you're learning the right sort of styles and shuffles (glow). That is all the encouragement I need to do more of this. I have been proper stalking the championship level dancers; looking at exactly where they are when they're on their toes and where their centre of gravity is. So watch out for that because I'll be banging on about it for some time, no doubt!
- Finally, this is about the order in which we learn a dance. Suggestions included starting at the end and working backwards so we repeat learn the trickier steps more. I will do that but in a slightly different way. I have been in groups where we've tried learning backwards and for some people it was a total disaster and really ruined their learning of the steps. Their heads just don't work that way. So, rather than risk that, what I'm going to do is teach the dance forwards but for every early step we learn, we'll also learn a tricky part of a later step so we've gone over and over the hardest bits before we put them together. Let's give that a try, see if it helps.

Thanks again for your support, your encouragement and your ideas! I really enjoy running these classes and I am encouraged that you enjoy them too!

Hels x