

My journey with Selnet

"I knew the Arts could be a catalyst for change but I was a dance practitioner at that point, not a social entrepreneur.

Becoming a member of SELNET has taken me on this incredible journey, giving people a voice who may not have the words to speak".



- Katie Whitehead, Founder and MD of Divine Days Creative Arts CIC



A recommendation...

The CEO of West Lancashire CVS saw Katie's dance class for adults with additional needs and the dancers captured his heart.

He first introduced the concept of a Social Enterprise and recommended we join Selnet.

Becoming a Social Enterprise

Divine Days was 6 months old and a Selnet Advisor sat with me at my kitchen table and listened to my dream.

I had the passion to change people's understanding of disabilities and make a positive impact on people's lives – and but it was Selnet's early intervention that helped me incorporate and get the right constitution and policies in place.



Practical support

Selnet provided valuable training for myself and our directors and opened up a whole world of business acumen and social enterprise knowhow.

With this strong framework in place we sailed on for almost 2 years when we again turned to Selnet for support with our digital presence and website design.

Motivation and new connections

A year later I found myself with 'Founder's Fatigue', disillusioned and at a loss with how to grow and sustain Divine Days.

Selnet Business Advisor Dawn met with me and we talked through my ambitions and what was holding me back. Through Lancashire's Growth Hub Boost, Dawn connected me with funded support services and new professional connections – with the number of ideas and contacts this meeting generated, doors suddenly started to open!



Business Support programme

Dawn referred me to support from Glyn Jones at Lancaster University's Health Innovation Campus. I accessed a life changing programme of business support focused on developing health and well being solutions for the future.

Glyn supported me in identifying my strengths as a social entrepreneur and my confidence in my own ability grew.



Motivation and new connections...

With Glyn's support we successfully secured a £102,000 Reaching Communities grant from the National Lottery to help reduce social isolation and teach new skills to adults and children with special needs or mental health issues.

This funding is supporting us in delivering dance classes for children and adults with additional needs as well as creative workshops.



Well Skelmersdale

With access to professional advice on the direction of Divine Days, I joined the Well Skelmersdale forum, which in turn led to a stream of positive business decisions.



The Legacy Project

Sat at the table was Selnet Director and Lancashire's reigning Social Enterprise Champion Paula Gamester.

Paula supported me on my journey to secure The Legacy project; supported Internships for young adults with additional needs.



Empowering Support

Skelmersdale is home to a thriving community of social enterprises delivering life changing work.

'Skem, I Love You' is a film telling inspiring and unconventional love stories that reflect lives and experiences that are rarely represented on screen. Divine Days' film 'Empowering Change' captures how we give a voice to people without words to speak.



Building for Sustainability

6 years on, Selnet presented another new opportunity. I joined a cohort of fellow social enterprise leaders on Lancashire's Building For Sustainability Leadership programme, in partnership with the Social Enterprise Academy. Combining masterclasses, peer support and professional coaching, it is enabling me to take Divine Days to the next level and flourish as a successful social enterprise.



New Year, New Home!

We are committed to collaborating and being an active part of the social enterprise community in Lancashire. We recently moved into new premises with The Sewing Rooms in Skelmersdale thanks to support from Well North. We are beyond excited about what the future holds for us. Bring on 2020!



"It takes more than an idea and passion to succeed; We needed Selnet to wrap around our dream and our purpose - Being a member of Selnet has enabled us to access start-up and business development expertise, new professional connections and exciting opportunities.

They are experts in their field so they can enable you to go ahead with what you do best.

Thank you Selnet for being there when we needed you!"

- Katie Whitehead, MD, Divine Days Community Arts



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