



POP has a new home: we are delighted to announce that we have moved into a shared space with DBI (Diversity Business Incubator) in HQ Millfields on Union Street. The team at DBI has welcomed us and we are already feeling light and bright in our new office. Please come and visit us: we can make you a cuppa and sit in the garden! You'll find us in number 37 just email us:

info@plymouthoctopus.org  
and let us know you're coming.

### Growth Spurt of Baby Bank



**PLYMOUTH BABY BANK**

SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES  
IN NEED

*Plymouth Baby Bank keeps on growing*

The Plymouth Baby Bank has been called into action more than a hundred times since it was set up in January providing necessary – and sometimes urgent - equipment and provisions free-of-charge to support babies; new Mum's and families across the city.

The PBB evolved from Southway's neighbourhood Baby Pantry which had been run by volunteers from the local community centre. Knowing that there was so much more they could do to help parents, Darren and Kelly Laphorn stepped in and 'adopted' the project. With a grant of £1000 from the POP fund Ideas Into Action and £600 from local businesses they rebranding it; set up a Facebook page; printed leaflets and bought some basic equipment, primarily, milk and nappies.

In a single twenty-four-hour period earlier this year the Baby Bank provided emergency provisions for twenty-six families across Plymouth. Darren and Kelly say they couldn't do it without the help and support of the Southway Community Group which allows them to store equipment in the community centre but perhaps more significantly has given the PBB an online presence on its website. Not only has this helped to recruit volunteers but it has enabled midwives to contact the PBB on behalf of their patients. From baby milk to Moses baskets and potties to prams the baby bank is now providing more support to more families across the city more quickly. If you'd like more information about the Plymouth Baby Bank please check out their Facebook page.

## Support Bubble



*Girls to Women take their positions as a new movement is born.*

For more info or to get involved visit:  
[www.girlstowomen.co.uk](http://www.girlstowomen.co.uk) or contact [girlstowomenuk@gmail.com](mailto:girlstowomenuk@gmail.com)

With arms entwined the Girls to Women initiative created a beautiful support bubble at its first networking event last month. On a sunny day in May more than twenty women, representing the stages of womanhood from puberty to post-menopause, came together to pledge their support to guide and support each other through the different periods of their lives. Girls to Women, which was set up a year ago by Liliane Uwimana from Diversity Business Incubator (DBI), is passionate that the girls of tomorrow are supported by the women of today:

*"It's not easy to be a woman and grow in a society that demands much from you with no navigation at all. So, we've started this movement to see girls evolve and be confident in all aspects of life. Our other passion is to share skills and resources with those who are less fortunate and make sure we don't leave anyone behind."*

The Girls to Women platform is now seeking women to mentor each other, and as Liliane says, "help empower, develop and educate our young women to embrace all their potential."

## Barefoot Bows Out



*Barefoot leaves its mark on the Keyham Carnival*

For nearly twenty-five years, the much-loved Plymouth charity, Barefoot, has supported thousands of young people - at little or no cost - through clubs, activities, creative workshops, trips and visits. Twice it has narrowly escaped closure, saved by large grants, community funding and local donations. Now, post Covid, faced with an increasingly challenging funding environment and a diminishing pot of money, the trustees have made the difficult decision to end the project and cease all services. Its Director, Richard Marsh says it was a difficult decision to make:

*"This was, and is, a huge blow to everyone involved, not least to all the hundreds of young people our youth team had been working with in NW Plymouth."*

Founded in 1996, Barefoot was set up as an arts education charity working with schools and young people before it evolved into youth work in 2013. It was widely known across

Plymouth for the hugely popular annual Big Arts Festival which ran for twelve years until 2012. What started as a one-day event grew into a two-week art extravaganza involving up to three thousand school children across the city. Barefoot also brought colour and vibrancy to the city, not least through its role organising the Plymouth Respect Festival city centre parade, which ran annually for eight years. For the last ten years it's focus has been on youth work in the Ernesettle, Whitleigh and St Budeaux areas of the city where the successful SpaceShot youth clubs have provided young people with a safe place to go and positive things to do under the watchful, and caring, gaze of professional youth workers.

The charity has certainly left its mark in Plymouth with thousands of young people benefitting from their relationship with Barefoot. There have been projects to learn about local and national politics; fundraising drives and responsibilities for young people

to help manage local events. Kiera Chown, who took part in Barefoot's inspiring Diversity Project project when she was fourteen, says it has been transformational:

*"I've become a nicer person to the religious people," she says. "I do not judge them anymore because I learnt about them and their beliefs and how they live."*

For nearly a quarter of a century Barefoot trod gently across the city with colour, creativity and compassion. Several times it averted closure but now, with many significant national funders having to focus on the cost-of-living crisis, the charity is calling 'time'. Richard is grateful to all the many partners who have supported the charity over the years but especially the young people:

*"Nothing lasts forever, but there will always be young people. Look after them."*