



## 'Setting up a club night changed my life'

By Nikki Spencer

**Standing on the dance floor in my silver platform boots and vintage jumpsuit, I felt a wave of excitement as '70s anthem *Good Times* boomed out of the speakers. As the music kicked in, I was overcome by a sense of belonging - which I hadn't felt since I'd last been clubbing 20 years earlier.**

After years of spending weekends alone while my daughters (Ella, now 25 and Flora, 21) were with their dad - and feeling lonely as they got older and needed me less - I decided to take control. I set up a dance club for people over 40 and I haven't looked back.

I split from my husband 15 years ago. It's hard being single

Above Nikki's club night boosted her social life - and her wardrobe

when all your friends are in couples. I'd go to dinner parties and feel awkward - or just not get invited. I felt trapped: where could I go as a single woman in my 40s? I tried salsa nights, but found waiting for a man to ask me to dance demoralising.

One night, a friend and I tried going clubbing but when we started queuing we realised everyone else was half our age. We'd also heard horror stories of people being turned away, so we gave up and went home.

I realised that over-40s needed somewhere to go that didn't feel like gatecrashing a teen party. Somewhere we could still dance - and I don't mean the waltz! So I took a leap of faith and arranged my first club night.

As a TV producer, I had no experience of organising

events, but I booked a venue in Greenwich and placed an ad in the local paper. I had no idea if anyone would come - but in the weeks beforehand I sold 250 tickets. It was incredible. When the Bee Gees' *You Should Be Dancing* came on, the dance floor packed out and I realised how much I'd missed losing myself in the music. I'd also recently met someone through a blind date, now my partner of eight years, and it was so special to enjoy it together.

That night, I knew I was on to something. I met a woman who had overcome cancer, while another was on her first night out since her husband had died, and so many more just wanted an escape from everyday life. A night dancing to funk, soul and disco music was apparently

the tonic that so many needed.

That was nearly seven years ago, and now I run the Haven't Stopped Dancing Yet nights every few months. I feel, in a small way, they've made a difference to a lot of people, and I'm proud of that. I now also have a thriving social life - and a vibrant wardrobe crammed with silver, gold and sequins. I no longer feel I want to blend into the background.

It's hard getting older and we all need something to lift our spirit from time to time. And if a '70s disco anthem doesn't do the trick, I don't know what will. ☐ Nikki's next event takes place on 4 March, see [haventstoppeddancingyet.co.uk](http://haventstoppeddancingyet.co.uk). Has one day changed your life? Email us at [stella@telegraph.co.uk](mailto:stella@telegraph.co.uk) or tweet us at @stellamagazine #OneDay