

# **Red Ladder Theatre Company Limited (The)**

Charity number 1037653

A company limited by guarantee number 01258679

## **Annual Report and Financial Statements**

**for the year ended 31 March 2023**



# **Red Ladder Theatre Company Limited (The)**

## **Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023**

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**Prepared by West Yorkshire Community Accountancy Service CIO**

# Red Ladder Theatre Company Limited (The)

## Trustees' report for the year ended 31 March 2023

### Reference and administrative details of the charity, its trustees and advisors

The trustees during the financial year and up to and including the date the report was approved were:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Emma McDowell	Co-Chair	
Fiona Gell	Co-Chair	
Ryan Case	Co Vice-Chair	Resigned July 2022
Janet Alexander	Co Vice-Chair	
Dan Bye		Resigned April 2022
Ben Rothera		Resigned July 2022
Craig Jefferies		
Jamie Jones-Buchanan		Resigned November 2022
Lucinda Yeadon		Resigned August 2022
Anna Turzynski		
Catherine Brennan		
Richard Lee		
Sheila Freeman		Resigned July 2023
Rebecca Owen		Appointed November 2022
Dick Bonham		Appointed February 2023
<b>Company Secretary</b>	Chris Lloyd	
<b>Charity number</b>	1037653	Registered in England and Wales
<b>Company number</b>	01258679	Registered in England and Wales

<b>Registered and principal address</b>	<b>Bankers</b>	
3 St Peters Building York Street Leeds LS9 8AJ	Triodos Bank UK Ltd Deanery Road Bristol, BS1 5AS	The Co-operative Bank 19/20 Commercial Street Leeds LS1 6AL

**Independent examiner**  
Simon Bostrom FCIE

**West Yorkshire Community Accountancy Service CIO**  
Stringer House  
34 Lupton Street  
Leeds  
LS10 2QW

# **Red Ladder Theatre Company Limited (The)**

## **Trustees' report (continued) for the year ended 31 March 2023**

### **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

#### **Structure of governance, recruitment of Trustees and the Charity's objects**

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and was formed on 17 May 1976. It is governed by a memorandum and articles of association as amended by special resolution 20 January 1994 and 5 November 2015. The liability of the members in the event of the company being wound up is limited to a sum not exceeding £1. The management of the company is the responsibility of the Management Committee members who are elected and co-opted under the terms of the company's governing documents. One third of the directors/trustees retire annually by rotation and are eligible for re-election. The constitution of the Committee is regularly reviewed and new appointments made after discussions regarding suitability for the specific needs of the company. The Company is established to promote, maintain, improve, and advance education, particularly by the production of educational plays and the encouragement of the arts, including the arts of drama, mime, dance, singing and music, and to formulate, prepare and establish schemes therefore provided that all objects of the Company shall be of a charitable nature.

The following information is made publicly available on their dedicated governance pages ([redladder.co.uk/about/governance](http://redladder.co.uk/about/governance)) to act as a resource for current and prospective trustees.

- Details of the RLTC governing document & copy of articles of association
- Role description for trustee & code of conduct
- Links to key company policies
- Staff & Board Member biographies
- Contact details for prospective board members to hear more
- Additional Charity governance resources
- Link to RLTC Charity Commission Report
- Link to The Essential Trustee (CC3), a publication by the Charity Commission detailing main duties of a charity trustee, as well as additional resources providing guidance on public benefit, decision making, annual reports, expenses, conflicts of interest, disagreements and disputes, board recruitment, resignation and removal, digital work and charity governance, finance and resilience, risk management and safeguarding young people
- Link to Charity Governance Code, and Voluntary Action Leeds factsheets
- Glossary of terms

#### **Organisational structure and decision-making**

The Trustees meet at least four times a year and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the company. The day-to-day responsibility for the company is delegated to the Senior Management Team of Red Ladder Theatre Company which, currently, comprises an Artistic Director and an Executive Producer. The company also has two Co-Chairs and a Vice-Chair position voted on by the Board of Trustees.

All board members are expected to read the papers in advance of board meetings and ask for further information and clarification when deemed necessary. Board meetings currently take place either in person or on video conferencing software or a combination of the two. We aim to be as flexible as possible with meeting times and locations to suit individuals' working patterns and commitments. It is also expected that board members will attend shows and support the company and the staff team when needed.

As a registered charity, RLTC board members do not get paid to be on the board. However, the company will reimburse any reasonable expenses (e.g. travel/childcare) incurred by (e.g.) attending board meetings and Red Ladder is committed to covering costs incurred by any additional (e.g. access) needs of prospective and current board members, such as BSL signing services.

In addition to board meetings, there are also two standing board subcommittees: the Finance & Risk Management Planning subcommittee and the Artistic Planning subcommittee. Board members are invited to take part in these according to their skills and expertise, and also meet with staff members regularly when needed (e.g. for business planning, policy review etc).

# **Red Ladder Theatre Company Limited (The)**

## **Trustees' report (continued) for the year ended 31 March 2023**

### **Trustee roles & responsibilities**

Below is an overview of what the Charity Commission set out, broadly speaking, as the six main duties for a Trustee of a charity. We have developed below what we believe this to mean in the context of RLTC more specifically:

- Ensuring the charity is carrying out its purposes for public benefit
- Complying with the charity's governing document and the law
- Acting in the charity's best interests
- Ensuring the charity is accountable
- Managing the charity's resources responsibly
- Acting with reasonable care and skill

But we think there are so many other things that are part of being a Red Ladder trustee, such as:

- Coming along to see our shows and events
- Meeting new people and being part of a community
- Thinking big about our future
- Being a vital part of conversations about the theatre
- Using your particular expertise and experience

### **Induction process for new trustees**

Prospective board members may also meet one or more board members in advance, to hear more about what being a Board Member involves and be encouraged to ask further questions. Prospective Board Members are then invited to the next board Meeting as an observer.

On acceptance from both parties the new Board Member will be invited to attend the following Board Meeting, at which they will be voted on to the Board. They will then be issued with a full induction pack, which includes the following information:

- Companies House / Charity Commission recruitment paperwork
- Co-op bank declaration form 3b for new Board members (for protection against money laundering)
- Most recent Trustee's report and annual accounts, and minutes from the last AGM
- Most recent business plan
- Minutes from the last 3 board meetings (incl. latest artistic, fundraising, marketing, press reports)
- A Declaration to sign to confirm understanding of the above information and of the expectations and duties of a Board Member and/or acceptance of the Trustee's code of conduct

The Company Secretary will issue the following forms:

- Bank declarations form 3b for new Board members (for protection against money laundering) for all accounts
- The new Board member will also complete an RLTC new trustee declaration form to ensure their suitability as a Board member.

In addition to the information provided above, it is expected that additional resource and/or information will be needed to accommodate any additional access needs of prospective board members, to be mutually agreed between prospective board members and the existing board on a case-by-case basis. RLTC is also committed to supporting all board members to carry out their duties effectively, e.g. board members will be regularly offered the opportunity to attend board training through a qualified body.

- The role of board members in business planning and executive team management
- Succession planning for executive and governance roles
- Proposed changes to governance structure: (Co)Chair / Vice Chair(s) & succession planning
- Board meetings, agenda, roles 'in the room'
- Communications between board members and staff team
- Expectations and responsibilities of the role

# Red Ladder Theatre Company Limited (The)

## Trustees' report (continued) for the year ended 31 March 2023

### Summary of governance activity April 2022 – March 2023

Three full board meetings took place between April 2022 – March 2023 and were approximately 2 hours long. All board meetings were chaired by both the Co-Chairs. All were held on video conferencing software, with (automatically-generated) captions and chat function enabled.

The AGM was held in December 2022; also on Zoom

Minutes from each meeting were generated and signed off by the board at the subsequent board meeting. In addition to the board meetings below, the board also met ad hoc when necessary, including the convening of the subcommittees and working groups (e.g. Artistic Planning Subcommittee; Finance & Risk Subcommittee; Away Day planning working group).

Date of board meeting	Type	No. of trustees present
Friday 8 July 2022	Quarterly Board Meeting on Zoom	7
Monday 7 November 2022	Quarterly Board Meeting on Zoom	6
Tuesday 6 December 2022	AGM	5
Monday 20 February 2023	Quarterly Board Meeting On Zoom	9
Monday 17 July 2023	Artistic Director Recruitment Working Group Away Day	7

At the 2022 Board Away Day in July, Rod Dixon signalled that he would be aiming to leave the company at the end of 2023, after 17 years as Artistic Director. This was the start of many discussions as to what the future artistic direction of Red Ladder could look like. It was the catalyst for the formation of the Artistic Direction Working Group (ADWG) led by Co-Chair Emma McDowell, facilitated by consultant Nicky Hatton and made up of other Board members working closely with the staff team. The aim of the Group is to ultimately find the company's next Artistic Director/s. A wide range of artists, theatre-makers, arts and community leaders, company stakeholders, participants and friends have also been consulted about the future artistic direction of the company helping to inform our thinking and shape our recruitment and application process. There is now an active recruitment campaign and we eagerly await the outcome of our search and many months of hard work.

### Related party relationships

Red Ladder Theatre Company has a strong, positive relationship with Arts Council England, the major funder of Red Ladder. Red Ladder's assigned officer from ACE Yorkshire is regularly kept informed of the artistic direction and ambition of the company and is an occasional observer at Board Meetings. ACE England continues to be extremely supportive of the charity and receives board papers and minutes of Trustee meetings. (See Risk Management - below)

Leeds City Council did not award core funding for the year in question, but is supportive of the company, and is regularly updated on artistic progress.

### Risk management

The Finance & Risk Management Committee constantly monitor and assess the risk the company faces mitigating where necessary and report as such to the full board of Trustees.

This Committee have assessed the major risks to which the company is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the company and are satisfied that systems and procedures are in place to mitigate our exposure to any major risks.

The major risk affecting the company was the possibility that Red Ladder would not be awarded core funding by Arts Council England for the three-year cycle 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2026 however the company was successful and secured annual funding of £189,000 which included an uplift to enlarge and deepen The Red Ladder Local non-traditional touring circuit throughout the duration of the funding.

# **Red Ladder Theatre Company Limited (The)**

## **Trustees' report (continued) for the year ended 31 March 2023**

### **Risk management continued**

During the financial year in question the Artistic Director of the company made the decision to go down to 60% as from 1 November 2022 with a view to stepping down completely in December 2023.

There is a wide ranging and comprehensive recruitment process being undertaken by a Trustee working group to replace the role by the end of 2023.

The Edinburgh run (August 2022) and subsequent tour (Autumn 2022) revealed very disappointing audience figures with income down by £10,000 on forecast. Significant savings were made over the expenditure budgets to mitigate these losses.

Red Ladder's major production for 2023 is Taxi and there has been increased expenditure with income set to be less than predicted. The Trustees have been made aware of this throughout the financial year to date and have agreed to commit £30,000 of reserves towards the project.

That apart there have been no other major incidents to report during this financial period.

The company has comprehensive IT cover both remotely and onsite with virus cover through the server and for all incoming emails and web usage. Red Ladder also backs up server activity locally on an external hard drive that is removed off the premises each day and, also, to the Cloud daily.

The company also has a robust Financial Control Procedures in place. A Finance & Risk Management Sub-committee meets regularly prior to board meetings and, when needed, at short notice to assess new opportunities and threats to discuss the latest financial figures, add context and report to the full board. This has the advantage of crystallising key information for board members and reducing duplication during meetings. This committee consists of five Trustees with a range of skills, knowledge and experience in management accounting and financial matters.

These meetings are chaired by Red Ladder's Executive Producer who prepares and circulates monthly cash-flows and management accounts to this committee with updated budgets and details of any new opportunities and/or threats that may arise.

During the financial year (2022/23) both the Finance & Risk Management Committee and the Trustees have received monthly cash flow forecasts and quarterly profit and loss management accounts with revised outcomes at every quarter.

### **Staffing**

Red Ladder employ three members of staff on payroll throughout the 2022/2023 financial year: The Artistic Director (Rod Dixon) went down to 60% salary in November 2022; Executive Producer (Chris Lloyd full time), and Creative Producer (Alice Barber) who joined the payroll in February 2023. Marketing Manager (Sasha Hawkes) decided not to return to the Company following maternity leave. The Company continued to engage Bonner & Hindley on Press, PR and Marketing duties as maternity cover. Carla Kingham, stepped down from the Company in August 2022.

The Company is also supported in the roles of Technical Manager and Social Media Manager on a freelance basis.

### **OBJECTIVES & ACTIVITIES**

#### **Red Ladder Vision:**

We make theatre about how we live now, and how we hope to live. The world has got to change, and the future is not yet written. The shared experience of theatre is about transformation and imagination, where we can collectively invent a better, kinder, fairer way to be.

# **Red Ladder Theatre Company Limited (The)**

## **Trustees' report (continued) for the year ended 31 March 2023**

### **Red Ladder Mission:**

We make theatre that gives a platform to voices that are rarely heard, and stories that are overlooked. Plays that invite you to lean in, identify, punch the air, laugh with the stranger next to you, cry in the dark, and want to take action.

We make theatre in Northern England but our world is huge and we can soar across borders. We are forward-looking, but not forgetful. We are full of heart, humour and big ideas.

We make new plays, empowering, supporting and inspiring writers and theatre artists to tell stories that start on their (often Northern, often working class) doorsteps and take radical leaps of imagination, challenging the systems that marginalise and oppress, and make inclusive, inquisitive, embracing, bracing, laughing, crying, thinking, drinking, dancing, singing theatre.

We will go wherever the audience is – to pubs and clubs, to housing estates and to theatres with velvet seats. We'll meet you there, for a good night out that ends with you stepping back out into a world that now feels different, full of possibility, and capable of transformation. And has you singing all the way home.

These principles and aims are the lenses through which we see our entire programme of work and have driven all company activity for the year April 2022 – March 2023. They will continue to guide the direction of the company and inform our trajectory throughout this Arts Council National Portfolio funding period and beyond.

### **Strategies for achieving objectives**

- To harness internal artistic expertise and work with exceptional, innovative collaborators to create relevant, subversive theatre of outstanding quality
- To embed equality and diversity at the heart of all our work as a means to reach and represent diverse audiences of contemporary Britain
- To improve our understanding of different access requirements and prioritise access and inclusivity within our artistic programme wherever possible
- To effectively monitor and increase audience development throughout the funding period, adapting and recalibrating our strategy as required
- To maintain and strengthen our profile as a national touring theatre company through frequent and strategic studio tours and healthy, positive relationships with key presenting venues
- To nourish new work and create professional and artistic development opportunities for early-career artists or people pushing the boundaries of current theatre practices
- To continue to develop a clear and achievable fundraising model to maximise the impact and sustainability of our work

### **ARTISTIC PROGRAMME: ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

#### **Artist Development**

Red Ladder supported a wide range of artists from emerging to established and mid-career in their funded research and development projects. This mentoring work is not necessarily aimed at reaching Red Ladder co-production but is a service we have offered in an ad hoc way and to see it formalised raises the profile of the company both regionally and nationally.

The following artists received support:

April 2022 – ongoing: Leon Fleming. Ongoing free creative writing office space given

June 2022: producing support for a writer called Debbie Beeks, to developing a play exploring women's autonomy, female friendship and domestic abuse. Debbie is a care leaver, which is an interesting perspective that she brings to the writing, as well as having grown up in Harehills – and so the piece is rooted in Leeds. Support via rehearsal space, Movement Direction, logistical, and for a successful R&D funding bid that will culminate in a sharing in September 2023. Dramaturgical support and free rehearsal space was given.

# **Red Ladder Theatre Company Limited (The)**

## **Trustees' report (continued) for the year ended 31 March 2023**

### **Artist Development continued**

Sept 2022: Alys Williams - a solo performance written and performed by Alys entitled 'The Light House' an account of her support for a suicidal boyfriend. This R&D culminated in a scratch performance at The Leeds Playhouse. Alys has since been invited to pitch this work for performance on the Red Ladder Local circuit. Movement and directorial mentoring given along with free rehearsal space.

Sept 2022: Nicky Davy's new play 'Eva' was rehearsed, and Rod Dixon supported some of the movement aspects and introduced the cast to Laban qualities of characterisation. Free rehearsal space was given and there are ongoing conversations about taking the piece on to Red Ladder Local.

November 2022: Roseanne Williams . Roseanne is an ambitious writer looking to find her niche. Dramaturgical mentoring along with free creative writing office space have been given alongside ongoing help and advice. Roseanne was offered a paid internship role with Debbie Beeks (see earlier) working on her project Terms and Conditions of Engagement following an intro by Red Ladder.

February 2022: producing, fundraising and dramaturgical support given to Megan Rose Kennedy, an emerging writer who had co-authored a fascinating modern-day adaptation of Wuthering Heights that explored the themes of class and gender autonomy in a contemporary context.

April 2023 – ongoing: Cian Ryan. Free photographic studio and storage space given to this Leeds Conservatoire undergraduate.

### **My Voice Was Heard But It Was Ignored by Nana-Kofi Kufuor at Edinburgh & National Tour**

This successful piece of work was re-rehearsed to be performed for a full run at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Although audience numbers were lower than hoped, the show was very well received by the critics and was awarded The Lustrum Award which is given to shows that stand out as exceptional in the host venue, Summerhall. The Edinburgh run was followed by another UK tour with the show playing venues on the Red Ladder Local and touring as far south as Brent and Rugby and as far north as Hexham and Alnwick.

In October 2022 the show received three nominations at The Black British Theatre Awards with the ceremony held at The National Theatre in London. Misha Duncan Barry was awarded best actor, Dermot Daly was nominated for best director, and Nana-Kofi Kufuor was nominated best writer.

### **Taxi! August 2023**

After a rehearsal at City Exchange building in the city centre, which included Sunday and evening work with a locally recruited community chorus, Rod Dixon and Douglas Thorpe of mad dogs dance theatre co-directed and choreographed an exceptionally talented cast of professional dancers and a physical theatre actor. Taxi was performed from August 10th to 20th 2023 at Old Woollen in Sunny Bank Mills in Farsley. Despite the show competing with the fact that many audiences are away on holiday during August, or theatregoers are visiting the Edinburgh Fringe, audience numbers were good, and 'word of mouth' recommended the show. Taxi was a highly successful collaboration and was a powerful exploration of how people connect and share the parameters of their lives. Unsurprisingly, the show explored 'endings', how we prepare for the end of life and the final chapters of our sometimes 'messy' stories.

### **Red Ladder Local**

The company continued to promote and book shows onto our Wakefield, Barnsley and Leeds circuit of non-traditional venues. The circuit is proving to be popular with audiences across the region with a range of shows, attracting regular returners to each venue as well as new attendees. In the financial year covered, the circuit saw 20 performances and 3 participation courses; from April – September 2023 it has seen a further 5 performances.

In Spring '22, our co-production with Wrongsemble was finally able to reach the circuit after numerous Covid-19 setbacks. The company returned in the Summer, when the venues saw their first ever outdoor productions in The Not So Grimm Twins, which was performed on the back of a horse-box come stage to delighted family audiences.

# **Red Ladder Theatre Company Limited (The)**

## **Trustees' report (continued) for the year ended 31 March 2023**

### **Red Ladder Local continued**

From Autumn '22 through to Spring '23, funding from Wakefield Culture Grants allowed the company to programme nine performances in Wakefield district. This supported a vast range of shows covering a variety of topics: family work exploring science, local interest work about Ferrybridge Power Station, a smash-hit Edinburgh Fringe interactive piece, My Voice Was Heard, and a variety night. This meant that funding attracted to the circuit was able to support gigs and opportunities for five companies other than Red Ladder. In Summer '23, Wrongsemble returned with the final instalment of their 'Not So' series, The Not So Big Bad Wolf, again performed outdoors.

Audiences were surveyed, with 354 responses collected; the shows had drawn over 40% first time attendees at the venues across the whole programme, while 20% travelled to the venues on foot. Cost was most frequently cited as the main deterrent to seeing theatre, which validated the value of the scheme.

### **Participation and Engagement**

#### **Belle Isle Stories:**

In April 2022 we received £10,000 from the Let's Create Jubilee Fund to run 'Belle Isle Stories', a community co-creation project driven by stories from the area. Four short pieces of writing were produced, all inspired by our experiences getting to know the community in a variety of settings, and the stories that people told us the four writers. We also ran a four-week Acting Course, and four-week Writing Course; one of the pieces, 'Belle Avenue', was co-created with participants of the writing group.

The four pieces of writing produced were shot and edited as short films. We worked with an incredible cohort of Leeds actors who only had half a day or so of rehearsal before hitting the filming, many of whom had previous connections to Red Ladder, having participated in Community Productions or Red Grit. The residents of Belle Isle were thrilled to meet some of the 'stars' when the four films were screened at the Gate in December 2022, which gave contributors a chance to see their stories on the silver screen.

#### **Red Ladder Local:**

From January – March 2023, courses were run on Red Ladder Local as follows, each with 10 participants in attendance:

- Stand-Up Comedy at The Cluntergate Centre
- Stand-Up Comedy at The Grove Hall
- Red Grit at Queen's Mill, Castleford

Of the attendees, 9/10 on Red Grit cited the course as making them more likely to participate in similar activity in future, while 2 participants cited an intention to pursue a professional career in the arts, directly encouraged by the course. As for the Stand-Up Comedy, five of the participants reported that they were going to pursue stand-up comedy further, and one of these participants has already booked in eight stand-up gigs since participating in the course. Courses each have a legacy WhatsApp group, so that participants can continue to support and encourage each other's creativity. They have also been added to Red Ladder's participation mailing list, giving them access to opportunities to develop their creativity further via their Artist Development programme.

#### **Taxi:**

Two teams of local people took part as the chorus in Taxi. We recruited a diverse range of people aged between 21 and 71 including some new graduates from Northern School of Contemporary Dance alongside people who had never ever performed. There was no obvious gap in performance ability because of the skilful way we choreographed the chorus.

# **Red Ladder Theatre Company Limited (The)**

## **Trustees' report (continued) for the year ended 31 March 2023**

### **Red Grit Actor Training**

After the gap through the pandemic there was a long waiting list for the courses and two were run simultaneously in Autumn 2022 with two cohorts training alongside each other. Several people from both these courses applied and joined the Taxi chorus. Another course was held in Leeds in Spring 2023. A final Red Grit course will be held between September and November 2023.

The new Artistic Director is more than likely to undertake this activity with something of their own design.

### **Key Developments for Red Ladder Theatre Company**

The company successfully re-entered the Arts Council's group of National Portfolio Organisations, in addition receiving an uplift in funding to deliver additional strands of the Red Ladder Local scheme. This uplift will fund additional performances and courses at the pre-existing venues on the circuit, as well as giving support for the company to work with the Civic in Barnsley to recruit at least one new venue to the circuit in Barnsley district, as well as sharing our Artist Development support to artists in the area.

The democratising of the way the Red Ladder Local circuit is programmed has now been fully established, with the first full Red Ladder Local Working Group pitch meeting held in May 2023. This saw eight artists and companies from a variety of styles and lived experiences pitch to venue representatives. Venues then selected their preferences, and subsequently we've programmed 23 shows up until May 2024, with more to add. This level of forward planning has not previously been seen, and hopes to establish a process that can be replicated going forward. We have made contact with companies previously unfamiliar to us, as well as having widened our pool of freelance facilitators.

With regards to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, the company has engaged an Access Consultant to advise the company how to remove barriers to engagement at both a practical and organisational level. A concerted effort has been made to engage with and employ artists from a range of lived experience, and methods for collecting and tracking data in this regard are in development via the Insight & Impact Toolkit.

### **Collaborations and Partnerships**

The collaboration with another Leeds organisation, mad dogs dance theatre, Taxi, was artistically successful and fruitful.

The Red Ladder Local circuit has continued to cement excellent relations with the three hub venues (Wakefield Theatre Royal, Barnsley Civic and Leeds Playhouse) which support the scheme through their marketing and box office departments. We have maintained relationships with our host venues on the circuit across West and South Yorkshire: The Grove Hall, The Cluntergate Centre, HOPS, BITMO, St. John's Parish Hall and Queen's Mill. The programming of so much work has kept lines of communication live, and allows us to continually review and improve our processes with regards to these relationships.

During the year the Company has continued to forged strong partnerships with leading educational establishments in the region including Leeds City College. The new studio spaces at the Quarry Hill campus were where the Red Grit training were held, and a young technician from their First Year Technical Production BTEC worked with us on our production of Taxi. This sits alongside existing relationships with the University of Leeds, Leeds Beckett University and conservatoires: Northern School of Contemporary Dance and Leeds Conservatoire (the renamed College of Music). These links help support the progression routes for students and, hopefully, encourage more to stay in Leeds once they finish their studies.

# **Red Ladder Theatre Company Limited (The)**

## **Trustees' report (continued) for the year ended 31 March 2023**

### **Future Developments**

#### **Sanctuary by Sarah Woods and Boff Whalley**

This new musical will be produced in Autumn 2024 in collaboration with CAPA College of Performing Arts Wakefield and The Wakefield Theatre Royal. CAPA College students will form the chorus for this four-hander professional show and the institution has offered their new studio theatre space for Red Ladder to rehearse the show alongside the students.

Sanctuary is highly relevant as a piece of theatre – examining the contentious issue of the 'small boats' and asking our audience whether we are a kind and welcoming nation or one with closed borders. A short extract was rehearsed with one professional actor and a chorus of CAPA College students to share to the Venues North network meeting at Sheffield Crucible Theatre in May 2023. The extract was well received, and several theatres have expressed an interest in programming the piece on Autumn 2024. In August 2023, we received £7,886 from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's 'Safer Communities Fund' to support the involvement of CAPA students in Sanctuary and the social impact of the show across West Yorkshire to combat race-related hate crime.

### **Financial review**

The net expenditure for the year was £4,546, all relating to unrestricted funds.

The budgeted deficit was £57,447.87 so this represents a terrific outcome for the year

### **Principal Funding**

Principal funding was received from Arts Council England via National Portfolio (£168,036).

A summary of funding is set out in note 2 on page 10 to the financial statements

The 2022/23 financial year was supported by Arts Council England with core funding via an extension year programme following on from the pandemic of the previous years.

Significant income was also generated by charitable occupation of leased spaces.

Ticket income from the run of My Voice Was Heard But Was Ignored at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival was disappointing but the tour held up well.

Trusts, Foundations and additional grant funding showed a £5,500 increase on forecast.

The major reduction in expenditure was the Artistic Director going down to 60% of salary, the decision to sell the company vehicle and the switch to the agency for marketing, Press & PR.

Red Ladder also received the tremendous news that we were to be re-admitted as a core client of Leeds City Council's Arts@Leeds funding programme for the financial year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

### **Reserves policy**

The reserves policy is to ensure there are sufficient reserves available to finance adequately, for at least three months, the operation of the company in the event of unforeseen circumstances. This reserve may be depleted to satisfy scheduled temporary liquidity deficiencies. Currently three months trading equates to £60,000 and this is updated on a monthly basis and is calculated on a rolling annual timeline.

This is a minimum requirement to mitigate an unexpected financial emergency. The Management recognise that in times of particular funding uncertainty around our core funder, it is prudent to build reserves above this to enable the company to survive and deliver our mission in the event of loss of a major element of our grant income and it has therefore been a stated aim to rebuild company reserves over the current Arts Council funding period, to bring them to a level which would withstand such longer term changes to our business model. The ambition is to sustain reserves that allow the company to function at a reduced level should Red Ladder fall out of the Arts Council's National Portfolio. This has been set at £115,000 which allows a level of activity to sustain the company to seek alternative funding and income streams with a view to, hopefully, re-entering the Portfolio in the next cycle of funding.

The company had succeeded in this during the year to 31 March 2023, and reserves at year-end stand at £140,000.

The budget for 2023/24 has the company utilising £10,368 of these reserves

# Red Ladder Theatre Company Limited (The)

## Trustees' report (continued) for the year ended 31 March 2023

### Co-Chairs' Statement

The Board of Trustees presents this report as an accurate representation of activity which has been delivered during the 2022-2023 financial year. The company is thankful to our independent examiners West Yorkshire Charities Accounting Service (WYCAS) for their prudent and consistent guidance in the presentation of management/year end accounts, to ensure the company's full compliance with statutory charitable accounting principles.

Our Co-Chairs' statement covers the period April 2022 – August 2023.

As a Board, we continue to build on the work of our vision and mission, improving our governance structure and the rolling recruitment of Board members. We are currently a 9 strong team welcoming most recently Beccy Owen and Dick Bonham who bring a wealth of experience with them and further strengthen our artistic direction and production expertise.

Our Co-Chair model of working continues to flourish. We enjoy the support of each other and from our fellow Trustees. Sharing the workload is critical as we are all volunteers and have busy lives and jobs to balance alongside our passion for Red Ladder. Our shared mission, vision and values is the glue that binds us all together and keeps the company moving forward. We will never stop advocating for social change and global justice.

Our inclusion in the Arts Council England (ACE) National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) for 2023-2026 programme was a huge relief and means that the company can continue to create challenging and exciting theatre and support more artists, writers and performers for at least the next 3 years. We thank ACE for their commitment to the company which included an uplift in funding. This will help us to deliver additional strands to our Red Ladder Local scheme taking theatre directly into the heart of communities. It was very pleasing to re-enter Leeds City Council's arts@Leeds funding programme for 2023 and we have always appreciated the Council's support. We also thank Wakefield Culture Grants and the Let's Create Jubilee Fund for their grant awards.

Artistically, we have delivered a vibrant Red Ladder Local programme, our participation and engagement programme including our Red Grit Actor training and our main production for this year of Taxi! Written by Andrea Heaton, Taxi! was co-directed by Red Ladder's Artistic Director Rod Dixon and Douglas Thorpe of mad dogs dance theatre combining dance with physical theatre and saw professional dancers working alongside a physical theatre actor and a community chorus. Anyone who saw Taxi! will tell you what a powerful piece of theatre addressing themes of trust and loneliness, and exploring life and fate. Vintage Red Ladder and theatre-making of which we are really proud.

Taxi! was also our beloved Artistic Director, Rod Dixon's last production for the company as he's hanging up his Doc Marten's after 17 years at the helm. Rod has been instrumental in putting the work, ideals and values of Red Ladder centre stage. His energy, passion and commitment have been central to producing theatre that contributes to a more socially, environmentally and economically just world. Rod has headed up a rich period of discovering and nurturing new talent as well as directing shows such as The Promised Land, Shed Crew, The Damned United, Mother Courage and Glory. He has helped to train and encourage hundreds of new actors and developed an impressive alumnus through Red Grit. He has helped many budding actors and supported mid-career artists and has actively embraced working with early-career creatives like writers, set designers, lighting designers, sound designers and stage managers whose experience with Red Ladder has given them a springboard into the industry. His influence has been enormous and cannot be underestimated or undervalued. We wish Rod all the best for the future as he heads off to Scotland to help set up an Arts-Led, off-grid intentional community in Scotland at the end of the year. Red Ladder is now actively searching for our next Artistic Director.

Finally, we would like to thank the company's core team of staff and freelancers, led by Rod Dixon and Chris Lloyd including Alice, Tom and Chris O for everything that they do. We would also like to thank the talented teams of creative practitioners and artists who we have collaborated with us this year. And of course, our audiences and supporters wherever you are and whomever you are. We are nothing without you.

Fiona Gell & Emma McDowell

Co-Chairs & Trustees. August 2023

# **Red Ladder Theatre Company Limited (The)**

## **Trustees' report (continued) for the year ended 31 March 2023**

### **Statement of trustees' responsibilities**

The trustees (who are also the directors for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees report and the financial statements in accordance with the applicable law and UK Accounting Standards.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for the year. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;

- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;

- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;

- state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;

- prepare the accounts on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial accounts comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (Charities SORP (FRS102)), and in accordance with the special provisions of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Approved by the board of trustees on 18/12/2023

Fiona Gell (Trustee)

# **Red Ladder Theatre Company Limited (The)**

## **Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Red Ladder Theatre Company Limited (The)**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charitable company for the year ended 31 March 2023, which are set out on pages 15 to 21.

### **Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the charity's trustees of the charitable company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the charitable company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- 2 the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- 4 the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities [applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)].

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Simon Bostrom FCIE

18/12/2023

### **West Yorkshire Community Accountancy Service CIO**

Stringer House  
34 Lupton Street  
Leeds  
LS10 2QW

**Red Ladder Theatre Company Limited (The)**  
**Statement of Financial Activities**  
**(including summary income and expenditure account)**  
**for the year ended 31 March 2023**

	Notes	2023 Total funds £	2022 Total funds £
<b>Income from:</b>			
Grants and donations	(2)	203,047	235,273
Theatre tax relief		1,626	11,663
Income from theatrical performances		26,325	21,745
Other earned income		18,471	2,446
Bank interest		306	44
<b>Total income</b>		<b>249,775</b>	<b>271,171</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>			
<b>Production costs</b>			
Performing and stage management fees		41,206	47,638
Sets props and costumes		5,675	855
Venue and rehearsal room hire		3,770	17,310
Creative fees		6,310	11,671
Technical equipment hires and consumables		70	-
Writers' fees, royalties and commissions		1,041	18,099
Accommodation, allowances and travel		9,291	10,619
Evaluation and monitoring		1,115	9,567
Production miscellaneous		1,060	515
<b>Marketing and publicity</b>		<b>23,643</b>	<b>22,456</b>
<b>Overheads</b>			
Salaries, NI and pensions	(3)	103,209	105,583
Rent and rates		18,752	11,660
Insurance		1,765	2,096
Repairs and maintenance		31	142
Phone and internet		1,899	1,260
Computer software and maintenance		4,846	6,680
Printing, postage and stationery		151	856
Trade subscriptions		2,332	1,226
Sundry expenses		624	569
Motor expenses		-	1,048
Travel and subsistence		1,301	1,509
Consultancy fees		22,744	15,733
Training and conferences		933	940
Bank charges		32	24
Independent examination		1,575	1,500
Depreciation		665	1,342
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>254,040</b>	<b>290,898</b>
Net gains/(losses) on investments		(281)	195
<b>Net income / (expenditure)</b>		<b>(4,546)</b>	<b>(19,532)</b>
<b>Fund balances brought forward</b>		<b>146,228</b>	<b>165,760</b>
<b>Fund balances carried forward</b>		<b>141,682</b>	<b>146,228</b>

All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing activities.

# Red Ladder Theatre Company Limited (The)

## Balance sheet

as at 31 March 2023

		2023	2022
		Total	Total
		£	£
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	(4)	<u>1,682</u>	<u>2,244</u>
<b>Total fixed assets</b>		<u>1,682</u>	<u>2,244</u>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors and prepayments	(5)	19,275	21,927
Current asset investments	(6)	9,913	10,195
Cash at bank and in hand	(7)	<u>132,360</u>	<u>166,887</u>
<b>Total current assets</b>		<u>161,548</u>	<u>199,009</u>
<b>Current liabilities:</b>			
<b>amounts falling due within one year</b>			
Creditors and accruals	(8)	<u>21,548</u>	<u>55,025</u>
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<u>21,548</u>	<u>55,025</u>
<b>Net current assets / (liabilities)</b>		<u>140,000</u>	<u>143,984</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		<u>141,682</u>	<u>146,228</u>
<b>Funds</b>			
Unrestricted funds		141,682	146,228
Restricted funds		-	-
<b>Total funds</b>		<u>141,682</u>	<u>146,228</u>

For the year ending 31 March 2023 the charitable company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the charitable company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476. The trustees (who also the directors for the purposes of company law) acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime and with FRS 102 (effective January 2019).

The financial statements were approved by the board of trustees on 18/12/2023

Fiona Gell (Trustee)

# **Red Ladder Theatre Company Limited (The)**

## **Notes to the accounts**

### **for the year ended 31 March 2023**

#### **1 Accounting policies**

##### **Basis of accounting**

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) and with the Charities Act 2011.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.  
There has been no change to the accounting policies since last year.  
No changes have been made to the accounts for previous years.

##### **Going concern**

The trustees are satisfied that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue.

##### **Incoming resources**

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) when the charity becomes entitled to the resources, if it is more likely than not that the trustees will receive the resources and the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

##### **Grants and donations**

Grants and donations are only included in the SOFA when the charity has unconditional entitlement to the resources.

Where grants are related to performance and specific deliverables, they are accounted for as the charity earns the right to consideration by its performance.

##### **Investments**

Investments are stated at market value at the balance sheet date. The SOFA includes the net gains and losses arising on revaluations and disposals throughout the year.

##### **Expenditure and liabilities**

Expenditure is recognised on an accrual basis as a liability is incurred. Liabilities are recognised where it is more likely than not that there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out the resources and the amount of the obligation can be measured with reasonable certainty.

##### **Taxation**

As a charity the organisation benefits from rates relief and is generally exempt from income tax and capital gains tax but not from VAT. Irrecoverable VAT is included in the cost of those items to which it relates.

##### **Tangible fixed assets**

Tangible fixed assets are capitalised and included at cost including any incidental expenses of acquisition. Gifted assets are shown at the value to the charity on receipt.

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets at rates calculated to write off the cost on a straight line basis over their expected useful economic lives as follows:

Lighting, sound and visual equipment: at 25% reducing balance

Motor vehicles: over 5 years, straight line

Office equipment: at 25% reducing balance

Computer equipment: written off in the year

**Red Ladder Theatre Company Limited (The)**  
**Notes to the accounts**  
**for the year ended 31 March 2023**

**1 Accounting policies continued**

**Pensions**

The charity operates a defined contribution scheme for the benefit of its employees. The costs of contributions are recognised in the year they are payable.

**Fund accounting**

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity.

Restricted funds are subjected to restrictions on their expenditure imposed by the donor or through the terms of an appeal.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the accounts.

**Leases**

Rents under operating leases are charged on a straight line basis over the lease term or to an earlier date if the lease can be determined without financial penalty.

**Red Ladder Theatre Company Limited (The)**  
**Notes to the accounts continued**  
**for the year ended 31 March 2023**

2 Grants and donations	2023	2023	2023	2022
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
	£	£	£	£
Arts Council England (ACE)	168,036	-	168,036	168,036
Albion Electrics re. vacant spaces	4,799	-	4,799	-
Land Securities Ltd re. vacant spaces	26,495	-	26,495	17,077
Arts Council England (ACE)	-	-	-	27,837
Arts Council England (ACE)	-	-	-	1,500
HMRC Job Retention Scheme (JRS)	-	-	-	10,065
Leeds City Council Covid relief funds	-	-	-	3,615
Other donations	3,717	-	3,717	7,143
	<u>203,047</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>203,047</u>	<u>235,273</u>

3 Staff costs and numbers	2023	2022
	£	£
Gross salaries	93,613	95,824
Social security costs	9,838	9,608
Employment allowance	(5,000)	(4,000)
Pensions	4,758	4,151
	<u>103,209</u>	<u>105,583</u>

The average number of employees during the year was 3.6, being an average of 2.7 full time equivalent (2022: 3.2, 2.6 FTE). There were no employees with emoluments above £60,000.

Defined contribution pension scheme	2023	2022
	£	£
Costs of the scheme to the charity for the year	4,758	4,151
Amount of any contributions outstanding at the year end	565	953

4 Tangible assets	Computer equipment	Office equipment	Lighting and sound	Total
	£	£	£	£
<b>Cost</b>				
At 1 April 2022	9,952	3,281	24,010	37,243
Additions	103	-	-	103
At 31 March 2023	<u>10,055</u>	<u>3,281</u>	<u>24,010</u>	<u>37,346</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>				
At 1 April 2022	9,952	2,969	22,078	34,999
Charge for year	103	78	484	665
At 31 March 2023	<u>10,055</u>	<u>3,047</u>	<u>22,562</u>	<u>35,664</u>
<b>Net book value</b>				
At 31 March 2023	<u>-</u>	<u>234</u>	<u>1,448</u>	<u>1,682</u>
At 31 March 2022	<u>-</u>	<u>312</u>	<u>1,932</u>	<u>2,244</u>

**Red Ladder Theatre Company Limited (The)**  
**Notes to the accounts continued**  
**for the year ended 31 March 2023**

<b>5 Debtors and prepayments</b>	2023	2022
	£	£
Debtors	8,195	4,659
Prepayments	7,983	1,887
Accrued income	1,770	15,381
Taxation	1,327	-
	<u>19,275</u>	<u>21,927</u>
<b>6 Current asset investments</b>	2023	2022
	£	£
Cash equivalents on deposit	9,913	10,195
	<u>9,913</u>	<u>10,195</u>
<b>7 Cash at bank and in hand</b>	2023	2022
	£	£
Cash at bank	132,176	166,527
Cash in hand	184	360
	<u>132,360</u>	<u>166,887</u>
<b>8 Creditors and accruals</b>	2023	2022
	£	£
Creditors	7,859	7,840
Amounts received on account for contracts / performance related grants	7,650	42,009
Accruals	1,575	1,500
Rents received in advance	2,250	-
Taxation and social security	1,524	2,252
Other creditors	690	1,424
	<u>21,548</u>	<u>55,025</u>

**9 Related party transactions**

**Trustee expenses**

No trustee received any expenses during this year or the previous year.

**Trustee remuneration and benefits**

No trustee received any remuneration or benefit during this or the previous year.

**Remuneration and benefits received by key management personnel**

The total employee benefits received by key management personnel were £90,241 (previous year: £84,178).

**Red Ladder Theatre Company Limited (The)**  
**Statement of Financial Activities including comparatives for all funds**  
**(including summary income and expenditure account)**  
**for the year ended 31 March 2023**

	2023 Unrestricted funds £	2022 Unrestricted funds £	2023 Restricted funds £	2022 Restricted funds £	2023 Total funds £	2022 Total funds £
<b>Income</b>						
Grants and donations	203,047	195,871	-	39,402	203,047	235,273
Theatre tax relief	1,626	11,663	-	-	1,626	11,663
Income from theatrical performances	26,325	21,745	-	-	26,325	21,745
Other earned income	18,471	2,446	-	-	18,471	2,446
Bank interest	306	44	-	-	306	44
<b>Total income</b>	<b>249,775</b>	<b>231,769</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>39,402</b>	<b>249,775</b>	<b>271,171</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>						
<b>Production costs</b>						
Performing and stage management fees	41,206	29,661	-	17,977	41,206	47,638
Sets props and costumes	5,675	855	-	-	5,675	855
Venue and rehearsal room hire	3,770	17,310	-	-	3,770	17,310
Creative fees	6,310	311	-	11,360	6,310	11,671
Technical equip. hires and consumables	70	-	-	-	70	-
Writers' fees, royalties and commissions	1,041	18,099	-	-	1,041	18,099
Accommodation, allowances and travel	9,291	10,619	-	-	9,291	10,619
Evaluation and monitoring	1,115	9,567	-	-	1,115	9,567
Production miscellaneous	1,060	515	-	-	1,060	515
<b>Marketing and publicity</b>	<b>23,643</b>	<b>22,456</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>23,643</b>	<b>22,456</b>
<b>Overheads</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
Salaries, NI and pensions	103,209	95,518	-	10,065	103,209	105,583
Rent and rates	18,752	11,660	-	-	18,752	11,660
Insurance	1,765	2,096	-	-	1,765	2,096
Repairs and maintenance	31	142	-	-	31	142
Phone and internet	1,899	1,260	-	-	1,899	1,260
Computer software and maintenance	4,846	6,680	-	-	4,846	6,680
Printing, postage and stationery	151	856	-	-	151	856
Trade subscriptions	2,332	1,226	-	-	2,332	1,226
Sundry expenses	624	569	-	-	624	569
Motor expenses	-	1,048	-	-	-	1,048
Travel and subsistence	1,301	1,509	-	-	1,301	1,509
Consultancy fees	22,744	15,733	-	-	22,744	15,733
Training and conferences	933	940	-	-	933	940
Bank charges	32	24	-	-	32	24
Independent examination	1,575	1,500	-	-	1,575	1,500
Depreciation	665	1,342	-	-	665	1,342
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>254,040</b>	<b>251,496</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>39,402</b>	<b>254,040</b>	<b>290,898</b>
Net gains/(losses) on investments	(281)	195	-	-	(281)	195
<b>Net income / (expenditure)</b>	<b>(4,546)</b>	<b>(19,532)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(4,546)</b>	<b>(19,532)</b>
<b>Fund balances brought forward</b>	<b>146,228</b>	<b>165,760</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>146,228</b>	<b>165,760</b>
<b>Fund balances carried forward</b>	<b>141,682</b>	<b>146,228</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>141,682</b>	<b>146,228</b>