

Charity registration number NIC100119

Company registration number NI026912 (Northern Ireland)

**NORTH WEST PLAY RESOURCE CENTRE
ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

NORTH WEST PLAY RESOURCE CENTRE

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NORTH WEST PLAY RESOURCE CENTRE

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	M Moriarty S Kelpie L Fitzpatrick F Mustapha J Harkin N Hargan A O'Neill C McGoran J Armstrong G McGuckin
Charity number	NIC100119
Company number	NI026912
Registered office	5-7 Artillery Street Derry BT48 6RG
Auditor	Moore (NI) LLP 21/23 Clarendon Street Derry/Londonderry BT48 7EP
Bankers	Bank of Ireland 15 Strand Road Derry~Londonderry BT48 7BT
Solicitors	Guckian Flanagan Solicitors 1 Limavady Road Waterside Londonderry BT47 6JU

NORTH WEST PLAY RESOURCE CENTRE

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The Trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024. The Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee and accepted as a charity by HM Revenue and Customs under reference XR18282.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to 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).

Objectives and activities

During this financial year The Playhouse has continued to operate within its updated Strategic Framework developed in 2021-22 whilst developing it, and with a view to embarking on a fuller strategic development process planned to be finalised for 2025 financial year onwards.

The Playhouse is a vibrant theatre and arts organisation in Northern Ireland. We're a national asset: an award-winning production theatre, an empowering centre for learning and a global leader in arts and peaceful change. We matter locally, regionally and to the international communities we connect with.

We're a space to make meaning and a place that's here for good. We believe in inclusion, inspiring creativity and opening up the imaginative world of theatre, dance, art and music for everyone to enjoy.

Our vision is to create community, celebrate diversity and empower people through the arts.

The difference we make is: Making meaning together creatively, peacefully and with hope.

We have three strategic areas of endeavour:

- Producing Art
- Empowering People and
- Making Peaceful Change

Our values:

- Inclusive
- Kind
- Creative
- Resilient
- Respect
- Excellence

Our Working Together Principles:

When working together internally or with external partners, stakeholders or clients we actively embody these principles

- Assume positive intent
- Listen first to understand
- Find the common ground
- Respect difference
- Build reliable and trustworthy relationships

NORTH WEST PLAY RESOURCE CENTRE

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

To support these areas of endeavour The Playhouse:

- Hosts at least 60 nights of high quality live and streamed Theatre, Music and Comedy by local, national & international artists in its 144 seat theatre.
- Regularly commissions, produces and tours new theatre and film. Its work has been seen throughout the island of Ireland, and in Britain, mainland Europe and USA to widespread critical acclaim.
- Delivers socially engaged arts workshops and projects that address difficult issues in some of the most divided communities in Northern Ireland. The Playhouse uses arts activity to encourage creativity and learning and to promote reconciliation and climate action. The Playhouse, with its partners, also delivers hundreds of classes in drama, visual arts, dance and music to thousands of people each year, including OCN qualifications in the arts and citizenship.

The Trustees have paid due regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

Achievements and performance

During the financial year ending 2024, The Playhouse continued to go through significant change as an organisation as well as deal with a post Covid-19 pandemic world and a significant cost of living crisis. The change included a new staff team, new programmes and activities and new partnerships, all of which took time, energy and resource. In this context The Playhouse was able to show flexibility and endeavour in developing its work and continuing to engage audiences and communities in high quality art and culture making.

Both physical and online audiences attended events in The Playhouse and in other venues we produced in (for example, The Guildhall). Over 21,000 people engaged in our performances, festival and learning and participation events both live and online. An estimated 75,000 engaged with Radio broadcasts about our work and through social media we reached online audiences of over 280,000. The Playhouse is reaching a point of maturity whereby it's a regional, national theatre and arts organisation as well as being a local asset having global impact. Our current programme of self-produced and visiting productions is expanding to include more and more co-produced work, to share resources, expertise and have greater reach.

Producing Art

Highlight productions this financial year include:

Little Shop of Horrors 17 to 23 October 2023

Produced by The Playhouse and Co-Directed By David Fairs & Conor O'Kane

"A vivacious, complex and above all human take on a true classic..." [Si Arts NI](#)

A sold out run which featured established and emerging artists working with The Playhouse through The Playhouse Music Theatre Company, which offers young people aged 16-25 years old sustained access to high quality industry-endorsed training that champions a 'learning by doing' approach. For young people with the potential to work professionally in the arts from backgrounds underrepresented in the wider sector, this music Theatre programme provides an alternative training and developmental pathway. Free to attend, members of the Playhouse Music Theatre Company received access to training in voice, movement and acting; a programme of 1-1 and companywide technical coachings; audition skills development sessions; voluntary performance opportunities; professional Equity contract auditions; network building opportunities; and additional pre-professional skills building workshops- all delivered by industry professionals. The Playhouse aims to use its influence, connections and expertise in music, theatre, community and education to offer local young performers a means to continue with pre-professional training and support them to gain and maintain the necessary experience to continue their artistic path onwards to higher educational training and/ or conservatoire education or join the creative workforce directly upon graduation.

NORTH WEST PLAY RESOURCE CENTRE

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Salon Series, Northern Ireland Opera

A partnership locally between The Playhouse and NI Opera to engage audiences throughout the year in this striking series of short operas, art songs, cabaret and music theatre performances staged in inspiring and entertaining ways.

Triumph of Art

The establishment of a national partnership with the National Gallery, London for 2024-25 as part of their bicentennial celebrations working with artists Jeremy Deller. An Assistant Curator has been recruited to be based at The Playhouse and initial site visits and wider creative partner conversations are underway.

Plugged-In Series

A high level series of music events co-produced with a range of promoters to include major artists such as Tom Robinson, Maxwell Quartet and Cara Dillon – at The Playhouse and at The Guildhall

Commissioning of Dangerous Play

A development phase with four leading local writers, leading to a final commission of a new musical play to tell the story of women's football across generations and continents and the social issues around it.

Relaunch of National Theatre Live

Bringing the best from the stage in the National Theatre direct to audiences in Northern Ireland.

Empowering People & Making Peaceful Change

In this year approximately 19,082 people participated in our Empowering People and Making Peaceful Change programmes.

Key activities included:

- *Arts and Climate Action*

Attitude

An exciting community engagement project grounded in the circular economy, that uses the arts and creative practice to encourage behaviour change and challenge attitudes to waste, consumption and climate action. This year saw the announcement of a significant further investment from the National Lottery of £1million + over 3 years beginning in 2024. The Playhouse is working with partners Zero Waste Northwest, Northern Ireland Resources Network, Queens University Belfast and Derry City and Strabane District Council to co-ordinate and deliver a programme which puts creativity and art making at the heart of transformation. Activities will include significant community and a Climate Arts Festival.

Blueprint

A partnership with University College Cork, Derry City and Strabane District Council and Mayo County Council using music as a means to engage communities in the city region affected by flooding due to climate change. The lived experience of the people involved will inform songs and a sound installation as well as learning resources that will be disseminated to councils across the island of Ireland.

Arts and Peacemaking

Establishing the That's Powerful Pilot Year

That's Powerful is a suite of rights based creative workshops for students, communities, residents, and localities, that culminate in an artistic event. That's Powerful with funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs delivered workshops with a range of new groups across the border area of the North West providing participants understanding of real-life lived experiences, developing civic discourse capacity around cultural and societal issues and nurturing abilities and skills in the creative arts.

Through modules:

1. Testimonial and discussion: sharing stories of lived experience.
2. Mindset and Relationships: exploring your current beliefs in relation to this topic and reflecting how your current thinking impacts how you relate to self, to others and the world around you.
3. Building Common Ground: respecting difference and role-playing scenarios and privileges/prejudices experienced by 'the other'.
4. Wellbeing, Hope and Resilience: envisioning a better future, workshoping how to take inspired action and appreciating the challenges of change-making within global societal systems.

Groups learned artistic skills, developed their creativity, became empowered, empathising and making positive choices today towards a brighter tomorrow.

NORTH WEST PLAY RESOURCE CENTRE

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Theatre of Witness Workshops

Enabling victims and survivors of the conflict in Northern Ireland to use theatre to share their experiences with workshop participants and promote peace building. This work transformed participants' perceptions and attitudes. Workshops were held with community and schools groups across Northern Ireland and border areas.

- *First steps towards an Open Arts Pathway through:*
Establishing The BRIDGE Project for 12-16 year olds (with funding from Garfield Weston, Ulster Garden Villages and Charterhouse Trust). The BRIDGE project allows young people to explore who they are as a performer and gain valuable experience from industry professionals via tuition and guest workshops. The course focuses on performance skills via singing, acting and dancing and offers an Open College Network (OCN) qualifications.
 - *Bridge Stepping Up*
Our introductory level one programme 'Stepping Up' takes place from March to June each year. The participants will complete OCN Level One Award in Creative Arts and Digital Technologies. It is a unique opportunity to learn, perform and develop your talents.
 - *Bridge Standing Out*
This course is designed to lead on from our in-house course 'Stepping Up.' This program is designed to both re-engage learners in education as well welcoming some new folks along the way enabling them to embark on our open arts pathway and avail from the opportunities that it presents. The course offers participants the free opportunity to study Level Two Award Creative Arts and Digital Technologies, completing the following modules: Musical Ensemble Skills and Performance Realisation Skills.
 - *Evolving the Playhouse Music Theatre Company – learning from our 3 year pilot and preparing the ground for a Playhouse Young Artists Programme to launch in 2025*
- *Song for the Soul* project works with a choir of adults with a diagnosed severe and enduring mental illness.
- *Offering corporate training* on the "Art of Communication" and "Art of Leadership". We successfully delivered a number of training days with local technology firms. We are promoting training days on our socials contact list and have developed a relationship with the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce.
- *Affordable space and resources* were provided for:
 - - our resident groups including Sole Purpose Productions, Lilliput Theatre, Northern Visions Project, PIPs Charity and alongside accommodating additional Western Health Trust groups as their regular venues were closed.
 - our resident classes in Ballet, Irish Dancing, Drama and Creative Writing.

With all of these achievements and cultural and civic benefit provided The Playhouse has experienced significant challenges in relation to cashflow and levels of restricted and in particular unrestricted funding needed to meet the increasing costs in a highly volatile, inflationary environment.

The financial challenges have largely resulted due to the essential core costs of sustaining a heritage building and venue with the appropriate staffing, delays in key funding streams which have sustained the organisation over time such as PeacePlus and the reduction in earned income in the midst of a cost of living crisis.

This has resulted in regular use of our agreed overdraft facility and a reduction in our reserves as the organisation has worked to meet these various challenges.

It is important to note that the organisation has also been going through a change process to improve its systems, programmes and collaborative partnerships in order to flourish into the future and there is evidence of this taking hold and leading to better outcomes. Perhaps most particularly in the biggest ever single investment in the organisation of £1.06m announced in this year by The National Lottery Community Fund to support the climate action project, Artitude.

NORTH WEST PLAY RESOURCE CENTRE

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Financial review

The results for the year are set out on page 14.

Total income for the year was £813,843 (2023: £1,167,411) of which 79% (2023: 85%) was generated from contracts, grants and donations and 21% (2023: 15%) from charitable activities.

Total expenditure was £1,079,026 (2023: £1,328,958) of which 95% (2023: 96%) was expended on direct charitable activities.

The balance on total funds at the year end was £3,423,982 of which £180,402 was unrestricted, £244,953 was restricted and £2,998,627 was designated in nature.

Going Concern

Having reviewed the Trust's forecasts, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the Trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. The principal factors underlying this judgement include:

- Current levels of financial performance by comparison with budgeted expectations;
- Expected revenue from the Trust's business plan
- Continuing support from the ACNI.

Accordingly, the Trust continues to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the annual financial statements.

Reserves Policy

It is the policy of the charity that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between three and six month's expenditure. The Trustees considers that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised.

Plans for future periods

The Playhouse will continue to develop and grow all of its existing creative partnerships, programmes and projects, while devising new, cutting edge, innovative arts, education and peace building initiatives that impact positively on areas and people of greatest need. Future plans include significant new works such as Operation Desperation (the foundation story of Foyle Women's Aid) and Dangerous Play (exploring the inspirational stories of women footballers across 3 eras and 4 countries); the development of an Open Arts Pathway to include Choice and Voice, BRIDGE and Young Artist programmes; and the development of its Arts and Climate Action and Arts and Peacemaking Programmes to meet the needs of people today.

Structure, governance and management

Governing Document

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and accepted as charitable by HMRC under reference XR18282. The company was incorporated on 28th September 1992 and is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association which was updated on 30th September 2014.

NORTH WEST PLAY RESOURCE CENTRE

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The Trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year were:

M Moriarty

S Kelpie

L Fitzpatrick

M McAuliffe

(Resigned 29 February 2024)

F Mustapha

J Harkin

N Hargan

A O'Neill

C McGoran

J Armstrong

G McGuckin

Appointment of Trustees

The Charity Trustees are also Directors of the company. A Trustee is initially elected by the Board in accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Organisation

The Board of Trustees which administers the Trust meets throughout the year as required.

The following Sub Committees also meet throughout the year as required:

- Audit Committee
- Personnel and Remuneration Committee

Trustees Induction

All new trustees are given an induction by the Chief Executive and provided with relevant documentation.

Risk Management

Since March 2014, The Playhouse via its Audit Committee, has completely revised its Risk Management Policy, Risk Register as well as its Fraud Policy. The Risk Register is reviewed and updated on a regular basis or as soon as potential risk is identified. Analysis for each risk is detailed in the Risk Register together with the controls currently in place to mitigate the risk and the further actions required to minimise the risk.

NORTH WEST PLAY RESOURCE CENTRE

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees, who are also the directors of North West Play Resource Centre for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company Law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then 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; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements 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.


Auditor

In accordance with the company's articles, a resolution proposing that Moore (NI) LLP be reappointed as auditor of the company will be put at a General Meeting.

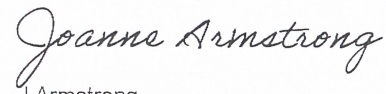
Disclosure of information to auditor

Each of the Trustees has confirmed that there is no information of which they are aware which is relevant to the audit, but of which the auditor is unaware. They have further confirmed that they have taken appropriate steps to identify such relevant information and to establish that the auditor is aware of such information.

The Trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.


M Moriarty
Director and Trustee

24 October 2024


J Armstrong
Director and Trustee