



TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

For Year Ended 31 March 2024

ACCOLADE ALL COMMUNITIES ART COMMUNICATION

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER NI100345

REGISTERED ADDRESS: 55 ST ANNES PARK, MAYOBRIDGE, NEWRY BT34 2JL

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Trustees' Annual Report for Year Ended 31 March 2024

1. Period Covered by Trustees' Annual Report

This is the Trustees' Annual Report for Accolade All Communities Art Communication (hereinafter referred to as Accolade) for Year Ended 31 March 2024 covering the financial period from 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

2. Governance, Administration and Structure

Accolade is governed by its constitution dated 21 April 2013, reviewed and updated in 2019, as well as by its supporting policies, namely, Safeguarding Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Volunteer Policy, and Financial Policy (introduced post March 2017). Copies of both the constitution and supporting policies are available on request in writing to the Charity Secretary at the registered address or alternatively by email to committee.accolade.acac@gmail.com. After consultation with the Charities Commission, the constitution was further amended at the last Annual General Meeting held on 23rd October 2023 to allow a committee member to serve more than 6 years, in the interest of continuity. Accolade is managed and administered by its Trustees who meet on a regular basis at committee meetings. Typically, committee meetings take place once a month but may be more frequent as and when required.

The Trustees are set out below. Where applicable, resignations are listed, and co-opted members noted.

Trustees 2022/2023

Rosaleen Moore (Re-elected at AGM October 2023) **Chairperson**

Colin Barr Re-elected at AGM October 2022 – **Vice Chair and IT and Finance support**. Resigned from the committee in September 2023

Gerry Hollywood elected at AGM in October 2022 stood down from committee in October 2023

Karen Hollywood elected at AGM in October 2022

Anthony McShane re elected at AGM in October 2022

Phelim Convery re elected in October 2022 **Treasurer**

Dora South elected at AGM 2022 **Vice secretary**

Josephine Campbell elected at AGM 2022, **secretary**

Trustees 2023/24

Rosaleen Moore re elected at AGM October 2023 **chairperson** resigned from committee on 9th February 2024

Attracta Clarke, elected at AGM 2023 **vice chairperson**, subsequently took over as **chairperson** in March 2024 following the resignation of the chairperson.

Phelim Convery – Re-elected at AGM October 2023 - **Treasurer**

Frank McGivern, elected at AGM 2023 - **assistant treasurer**

Dora South – re-elected at AGM. - **assistant secretary**

Josephine Campbell – re-elected at AGM 2023 - **Secretary**

Kathleen McCaul elected at AGM 2023 resigned in April 2024 for personal reasons

Carmel McParland elected at AGM 2023

Joan Mulholland elected at AGM 2023

3. Geographical Scope, Charitable Purpose, and Accolade Groups

Accolade is registered as a charity in Northern Ireland, based in Banbridge, Newry and the surrounding South Down area. It is a community-based organisation which was formed to deliver arts-based programmes within an artistic, social, and educational context. In particular, its purposes, through its various artistic mediums include, the promotion of equality and diversity, the advancement and improvement of arts and culture, and education the promotion and preservation of physical and mental health.

The three current core Accolade groups, the community choir, the ukulele group and the community chamber orchestra, include people from different backgrounds, different communities, different ages, different religious beliefs, different political persuasions. Members attending the groups participate in the activities (music and vocal lessons, rehearsals, workshops, events, concerts) with the main purpose of connecting people through music.

Through singing and playing music together, they aim to find ways to open doors for understanding, acceptance, collaboration, friendship and support for the diversity in Northern Ireland, especially in the Newry and Mourne area. Banbridge Community Chamber orchestra reaches out to people with musical and instrumental interests, to provide them with a possibility to experience the power of music as a bridge between the cultures, communities and people. They also aim to benefit the participants and local community in promoting good social and mental wellbeing, providing stimulation, preventing loneliness and isolation.

The management Committee's focus for the year had been to consolidate membership and increase diversity; to review the current activities of Accolade and determine medium and long term goals; to identify associated costs and appropriate funding streams.

4. Membership

Enrollment of members for the year was 66, a modest increase on last year, following efforts to recruit using posters, banners and social media. Despite efforts to inform New Nationals of the activities of Accolade, there was not yet an uptake from that section of the community. While membership does reflect both of the main sections of the population in Northern Ireland, it is weighted slightly in one direction, reflecting the localities in which it operates and their dominant communities, so achieving better diversity remains a challenge.

5. Funding.

The £10,000 received from the Arts Council for 2022/23 for Reconnecting People Through Music, had been completely used by March 31st 2023. Accolade received £5,000 from the Arts Council Awards for All in April 2023 to continue this project. This was less than was applied for and hoped for, however, restricted funds accrued from weekly donations from members, and from concerts and performances were used to supplement costs for the year and to cover facilitators fees, venue hire, insurance costs, monitoring and evaluation.

6. Activities and Performances

Concerts

On 19th June, 2023 the orchestra gave a very successful concert with two guest singers in Bannside Presbyterian Church Hall. This was well attended and tickets for the concert and raffle made a significant contribution to funds. It also raised the profile of the orchestra in the area and provided good publicity.

The orchestra also gave a candlelight concert in the Bannside Presbyterian Church, for Christmas, with contributions from guest singers from other surrounding churches. This was a successful interdenominational event and was enjoyed and participated in by a range of age groups. Donations for tickets helped towards the funds.

The choir, the ukulele group and the orchestra jointly gave a concert in Newry in Riverside Reformed Presbyterian Church. Again this was very successful with another substantial contribution to funds from the sale of tickets, and further publicity of our activities. Each of these performances gave purpose and a sense of achievement to members, many of whom reported benefits including a sense of wellbeing, camaraderie, improved mental wellbeing, improved confidence, intellectual stimulation, and joy and pleasure from being part of the groups and participating in performances together.

Other performances throughout the year include the following;

- The choir and Ukulele group collaborated with a gardening group event called Soil and Soul, in Warrenpoint Park, in an event supported by Warrenpoint Harbour.
- The choir sang at a carol service in Loughbrickland Presbyterian Church
- Choir and Ukulele groups played and sang in Buttercrane Shopping Centre, Newry, for Christmas shoppers.
- The choir sang for diners in Loft56 - a restaurant in Rathfriland.
- The orchestra entered Warrenpoint Feis playing two contrasting pieces. They came first with very satisfying feedback from the adjudicator.
- The Ukulele Group played and sang at Ardmaine Nursing Home, and Rockfield Nursing Home, being joined on St Patrick's day by some to the choir.
- The orchestra enjoyed a successful 5 day Summer workshop. Rental of premises for it was paid by Accolade and tutor was paid by the members who

attended. The workshop served to improve the musician's sight reading abilities and extend their repertoire.

7. Progress and Challenges.

The Choir

The acquisition of a new keyboard for the use of the choir was beneficial and appreciated. The concerts and events listed above brought a sense of achievement and satisfaction, as well as raising some funds for Accolade. Members' feedback reflected a good level of satisfaction with the choir, with members enjoying the social aspect of making new friends and giving and receiving support from others. They acknowledged the many health benefits from singing, including keeping the brain stimulated. They reported that singing together in three part harmony builds up confidence, keeps one alert and builds up concentration skills. Choir members enjoyed learning a variety of new songs, sometimes performing along with the orchestra and ukulele group. They have great appreciation for the tutor Orla, whom they find to be pleasant, caring, considerate and hard working. Audience feedback included commenting on how much people enjoyed the familiar songs and the opportunity to join in and sing along. The music chosen was considered very relatable and easy for the average singer, without the need to be able to read music. The challenge for the choir, like all of the groups, include increasing membership and improving diversity.

The Ukulele Group

The Management Committee has been concerned about the decreasing membership of the ukulele group over the last 12 months. It was recognised that there is a need for open and honest communication going forward, where all viewpoints are respected and common goals are agreed.

Feedback from members included the enjoyment of the social aspect of meeting friends. Singing and playing in a group builds confidence. All members should be encouraged to practise at home to improve the progress of the group. There is a need to ensure that the key chosen is one in which all ukulele members feel comfortable to sing along. Again the challenge is to increase membership substantially for the ukulele group, and increase diversity.

The Orchestra

While there has been an increase in numbers in the orchestra, it has been slow, but attendance and enthusiasm has been consistently good throughout the year. Setting goals for concerts and recordings has proved very worthwhile and considerable work went into events. The successful concerts mentioned above brought in a good contribution to Accolade's funds, and increased publicity. First place achieved in a Feis resulted in a very positive press write up for the orchestra and overall Accolade group. The summer workshop served to develop the skills of the individual players and enhance the overall skill and sound of the orchestra. Collaborative working between the three Accolade groups still needs to be increased. Joint social events and the re-establishment of a regular newsletter may assist in improving communication between the groups.

Members expressed very positive sentiments about the benefits of being members of a chamber orchestra and reported feeling uplifted, intellectually stimulated, having a great sense of achievement and wellbeing from the friendship and challenge of performing together. They were very positive about the leadership they received from Kim and the support and patience shown by her, and the range of music covered. It was appreciated that the group has a wide range of musical ability and covers a wide range of ages, from 30 upwards. This is an extra challenge which Kim and the members manage well, supporting everyone and meeting their varying needs. The orchestra expressed a desire to work with the choir and ukulele groups more often. Getting new members is an ongoing challenge here too.

Some members wanted more easy access to payment online and to having application and evaluation forms available online. Payment of fees and donations can now be made by bank transfer, so this is a step in the right direction.

Financial Statement.

In summary, the financial position of Accolade at the end of the financial year was as follows;

Cash in bank and in hand 31st March 2024 £13,683.

This amount is divided between unrestricted funds, (i.e. those made up of voluntary

donations and membership fees, and not attributed to specific funded projects) and restricted funds £400

Full financial details are included in the attached accounts.

In preparing this Report the Trustees have had due regard to their statutory obligations under the Charities Act and have had due regard to the guidance prepared by the Northern Ireland Charity Commission on public benefit.

The Trustee Report and Annual Accounts were adopted by the

Management Committee on 11th Sept 2024.

Signed Attracta Clarke Attracta Clarke (Chairperson)

Dated: September 11th 2024,

Signed Josephine Campbell Josephine Campbell, Secretary

Dated: 11th September 2024