

OPEN ARTS

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing document

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the company and is governed under its Articles of Association. In the event of the company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1

Recruitment and Appointment of Directors

The trustees of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law. Under the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles of Association the directors are elected to serve for a period of three years after which they must be re-elected at the next Annual General Meeting.

The trustees of the company have a mix of business and artistic skills. In the event of particular skills being lost due to retirement or resignation, suitable individuals are approached to offer themselves for appointment as trustees.

Trustee induction and training

Most new trustees are familiar with the work of the charity. New trustees are encouraged to attend suitable training courses to familiarise themselves with both the work of the charity and their responsibilities as trustees. They are also made familiar with the Open Arts' Governance handbook.

Risk management

The trustees have carried out a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed, and where appropriate have put in place systems and controls to mitigate the effect of those risks.

Objectives and activities

The principal activity of the company is to promote and co-ordinate arts activities of all kinds by and with disabled people in the area of benefit, in accordance with the principles as laid down in the Memorandum and Articles of Association of Open Arts.

Achievements and performance

From April 2022 until March 2023, we delivered 413 creative workshop sessions that engaged 554 individuals.

In April 2022, we re-instated our core programme to pre-pandemic levels. This included increased in person capacity by removing social distancing and allowing more movement around rooms e.g., for drama where participants had mainly remained seated. Where classes were kept shorter between September 2021 and April 2022, we increased the length of time back to the pre-covid times.

On a weekly basis, throughout the year we delivered:

- 3 x visual classes including one for blind and visually impaired
- Monday Players drama
- Open Arts Community Choir
- Creative writing
- Gamelan Group
- Luminous Soul dance

On Thursday 16th June we launched Words Out, a new anthology of poetry/creative writing, which featured work from participants across our core programme. The event was part of the Belfast Book Festival and featured readings, music, and dance from Luminous Soul.

The Open Arts Community Choir have been performing again. In April 2022 they competed in Bangor International Choral Festival where they won 2 awards.

On 25th August they performed at the Belfast Mix Tape event in the Waterfront Hall with Ferna. They performed the song 'At Home' that was written during sessions with our participants and Ferna in early 2022.

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Achievements and performance (*continued*)

On 29th September they also performed with local band Blackjack at the Arts & Business Awards. .

Throughout April to June, we delivered workshops in partnership with Belfast Abbeyfield Society, funded by ACNI Arts & Older People. Dancers and musicians worked with residents of 5 residential homes in mindful movement and dance. The project culminated with outdoor performances at each of the houses, the creation of lyric books and movement prop packs that were left with residents.

Over July and August 2022, delivered nearly 20 sessions as part of the Solas Summer Schemes for children with autism and additional complex needs.

We continued to deliver our In Tune project (funded by Children in Need).

There were regular sessions for both partner organisations:

Angel Eyes – Tiny Tots, Primary age group, Teen Hub and 1:1 sessions for children with additional complex needs.

Autism Initiatives – group and 1:1 sessions.

"This programme has been invaluable for K's mental well-being and personal growth. It has provided him with an opportunity to socialise and learn important skills, helping to build his confidence in a safe and understanding setting. K always leaves the music programme chatting and happy (this is usually a very rare occurrence when he has been in a social setting)."

Take Away Theatre, funded by Bank of Ireland Begin Together, is our interactive, fun performance that happens at home for disabled people and their families. We delivered multiple visits throughout the year from Belfast to Bessbrook, Ballynahinch to Bangor.

"I cannot thank you, and your team, enough for the amazing time we had today; Jessica and Stephen are wonderful and brought so much joy into our home. I must say I was a little concerned as A had been in a bit of a 'twist' all morning and it was hard to know how engaging he would be.

However, the pair were able to turn him around and their patience and creative imaginations were amazing. We all had a really great time.

Thank you all so much again, best wishes."

In October 2022, we produced Weaving Threads, a performance as part of Bounce Festival. We facilitated 3 of our participants, who had developed their own work with funding from iDA, to collaborate and perform. The feedback from the emerging artists involved in this process demonstrates how Open Arts nurtures and supports artistic talent:

"I never thought my disability could be something that made me unique and enabled me to create art in a new and interesting way. This new confidence and acceptance of myself empowered me to think about myself as a performer."

"Open Arts is my creative and social lifeline and being part of the organisation has helped me enormously over the past couple of years, the Open Arts team has also helped me to access my own funding. I now have mentors who are helping me to create my own work that explores my feelings about my diagnosis of autism later in life."

As part of the opening of Bounce Festival 2022, we performed a flashmob in Castle Court with Open Arts Community Choir and Luminous Soul dancers. This was written in The Neurodiverse Review, a UK wide, dedicated review site for neurodiverse, autistic, and disabled-led work.

"I don't know if flashmobs are usually reviewed, but I feel in this case, it should be. It was great to see disabled dancers taking up space unapologetically, performing without permission, not caring if anyone was watching or not. It was empowering and beautifully done."

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Financial review

The company is a non-profit making organisation. The results are set out in detail on page 5. The company had net expenditure for the year of £26,539.

The principal funding sources of the charity are by way of grant, principally from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, and by way of charging fees to various groups for services rendered.

Reserves policy

The trustees have examined the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the funding of the organisation. Unrestricted free reserves are currently £82,340, as detailed in note 14, and this level of reserves would be sufficient to fund the organisation's running costs for a period of six months at current levels of spending and cover redundancy payments for the current staff. The trustees consider this level of reserves to be adequate to meet the needs of the charity.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees, who are also the directors of Open Arts 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).

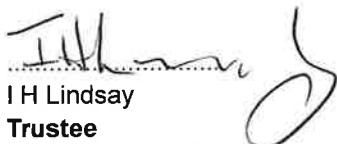
Company Law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

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 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 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 and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

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


I H Lindsay
Trustee

Date: 12/12/23


S Finnegan
Trustee