

# BEAT CARNIVAL ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE 2022 - 23 YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2023



Beat Carnival is constituted as a Company Limited by Guarantee  
Registered number: NI27789 Registered in Northern Ireland Registered charity number: NIC103347  
Beat Carnival is governed by Articles of Association, updated in April 2015

## ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

### REPORT INTRODUCTION

The Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 sets out a legal requirement that all organisations registered as a charity in Northern Ireland must have purposes that are for the public benefit. This Annual Report provides information on how the charity has met the public benefit requirement during the year: to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's purposes and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries.

### OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

#### **What The Organisation Does**

Beat Carnival is Northern Ireland's foremost and long-standing Carnival Arts company. We create carnival parades and outdoor arts performances. We encourage our city of Belfast and communities across the country to think big about celebrating our creative, community life in ways that are ambitious and welcoming to all. Beat's specialisms include performance arts such as drumming, music, singing, street dance and puppetry. We provide training and free-of-charge participation programmes and we have extensive experience of work with community organisations. Beat's first carnival parades were in 1995. There is no other carnival arts organisation of the scale, activity, history or influence in Northern Ireland, where Beat Carnival has introduced many of the artform techniques and trained many of the artists now working across the country.

Participants gain new skills, connections and support at weekly activity programmes that take place in the Carnival Centre plus extensive local outreach in Belfast postcode and across Northern Ireland. Carnival arts, outdoors in public spaces with people from diverse backgrounds, are experienced in ways that are culturally inclusive. Carnival arts bring new sources of creativity to Northern Ireland's traditional experience of cultural parades and street music. The organisation's involvement in a wide range of networks, locally and internationally, increases diversity of relationships and shared benefits. New and unique opportunities enable people and communities to increase skills; meet people from other areas, backgrounds and traditions; and gain positive experiences. Beat Carnival's activity is provided free of charge to participants and audience so that barriers to access and engagement are as low as possible. Ease of access is one of the ways that the activity increases equality of opportunity. The organisation operates Beat Carnival Centre. The Centre with its programme of arts creation, education, training, community outreach and events production, provides a focal point for anyone interested in the development of carnival arts. Artists design, create, rehearse, teach and train at the Centre. The Carnival Centre's work makes a special contribution to festivals, community celebrations and civic events. Importantly, the premises and its activity provide an accessible, supportive and 'safe space', particularly for young people. Participants at Beat's weekly programme of open-access workshops range in age from 4 to over 60 years. Workshops specialise in teaching carnival arts of drumming, dance, making (floats, puppets, props, costume), music, street theatre performance, children's arts and crafts. Six or seven sessions operate over three to four nights a week at the Centre. Public audience at Beat's free events gain enjoyment and an increased sense of community pride and connection. In 2022-2023 Beat Carnival provided 1,995 benefit activities (workshops, artist sessions, events) for 139,500 beneficiaries.

#### **Vision For the Future, Mission Statement and Value Base**

##### **Vision**

The vision for Beat Carnival's work with artists, their audiences, the community, individual participants and young people is of a:

*"vibrant, colourful, creative and welcoming society".*

Beat Carnival will aim to achieve this through their organisational vision of being:

*“the leaders in excellence of Carnival artforms”.*

### **Mission**

The Beat Carnival’s mission statement is to:

*“Make accessible and spectacular Carnival, leaving a legacy of creative skills, collaboration, participation and celebration”.*

### **Values**

Beat Carnival operates to a set of core values.

- Inclusive: Carnival is for everyone. Carnival activities celebrate diverse cultures and a common humanity with as few barriers to participation as possible.
- Quality: There is an aim for excellence in everything Beat Carnival does.
- Innovative: Beat Carnival will strive to take forward the carnival artform, creating new ideas and approaches. The skills and knowledge of local artists and carnival participants progressively increase through training and experience.
- Legacy: Carnival will be devised, developed and delivered in ways that leave a legacy of skills, ambition and achievement within communities.

Civic pride: Carnival makes visible the organisation’s great pride in being

## **PROVIDING PUBLIC BENEFIT**

### **WHAT HAPPENED IN 2022-2023**

Direct benefits provided by Beat Carnival’s activities in 22-23 included new awareness of, and participation in, creative activities for individuals, for groups and communities and for the general public. Free-access, collaborative, carnival arts activities fostered good relations and, when possible, animation of public and neighbourhood spaces, including spaces that have been or are contested or controlled by factions. The public spaces where arts activity took place were made more welcoming for all. Beat Carnival’s activity increased interest in arts in young people and under-engaged groups. The activity improved access to information and expertise about arts for excluded people and communities. In areas that are deemed ‘disadvantaged’ it inspired ambition and enabled personal achievement and pride. Beat created developmental partnerships with community groups and other arts companies, to increase representation, knowledge sharing, skills sharing, specialist support, capacity building and the promotion of shared values. Beat’s safe, imaginative and attractive arts and cultural activity resulted in people, many of them being children and young people, engaging with others. Pleasure and fun were gained through the programmes. Children and young people benefited from emotional growth, personal development and increased social skills. Participants, both individuals and groups, were better equipped to make positive changes in their lives. Social connections were enabled in a year of damaging isolation and more people took positive action on issues. An important benefit of Beat Carnival’s activity was increased support of young people, whose mental health issues were magnified by the Covid impacts in recent years. The impact of Covid curtailed activity in schools because of their internal Covid restrictions.

Activity development and performance highlights over the year:

- This was the final year of the SPOTing programme (Spaces Of Transformation), a three year arts education methodology project with eight cultural centre partners in Europe. Learning from this project is feeding into Beat's Youth Programme development.
- Youth Development. Beat Carnival worked with over 60 young people per week (term times) across four projects in our core programming. The young people range in age from 5 years to 18 years old. The programmes focus on creative skills development; encouraging self-expression; and experiencing joy & less stress. The youth programme facilitators identified areas for future development and are working on a funding plan to support and ensure the youth development in coming years.

- Associated with the core youth programme, the Take A Beat summer week, Future Leaders and What's The Story? initiatives proved successful. 'What's the Story?' is a diverse group of passionate and enthusiastic young artists, interested in exploring arts for change and social action in a fun, safe and creative space. The group received presentations from a variety of Belfast arts activists including the Array Collective, Pure Mental, Another World Belfast and Alice Thompson ('Find your Why' Workshop). At the end of this year there was some specific work with 25-year-olds, as we approached the 25-year anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement for peace in Northern Ireland.
- Beat produced a Spring Neighbourhood Festival that united two communities in the Shankill area: Lower Oldpark Community Association and Denmark Street Residents Association in Lower Shankill estate.
- Many performances and events produced over the year included Halloween and Christmas entertainment.
- Following successful delivery of the 2022 St Patrick's Day Pageant pilot programme, Beat produced 2023's Belfast St Patrick's Day Parade, commissioned in Belfast City Council's Creative Development Awards for a St Patrick's Day 'New Chapter' of Belfast celebrations. Innovations in our participation programme and the bespoke Parade event were well received, however production was stressful as the contract was given only six weeks prior to St Patrick's Day. Over 1,000 people were involved in the programme and parade; the audience was the largest ever, with 40,000 packing the streets all around the city-centre parade route. We devised a 'Voices of Belfast' theme, reflecting the diversity of Belfast's music culture and traditions. Prior to the parade we compiled a Making St Patrick's Day Parade exhibition, displayed in Belfast Central Library.
- International collaborations and relationship development included the Trans Europe Halles network and a meeting in Prague; TEH Arts Education Hub; TEH Cultural Transformation Project and Movement; International Music project exploration with practitioners in Scotland, Metz France and Belgium; Samba connections and masterclass a Pernambuco, Northeast Brazil percussion master. A long-time Ukraine cultural partner visited Beat, facilitated by British Council. We worked with international partners on a proposal to participate in Voyages/Transfestival, Metz, France in May: it did not happen as a funding application was not successful. It is notable that two of the creative partnerships producing performance sections for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Parade in London wanted Beat Carnival to perform with them. In the end, the expected London budget was reduced and it was not possible for us to travel and perform with paid artists.
- Artist training: Structural design and prototyping; and Silks artwork / dying; Arts Education and Community Arts methodology training for key Beat Community Artists; Four Music facilitators received training with London School of Samba; a specialist Maracatu Masterclass with Alexandre Garnizé from Brazil.
- There was a Board and Staff Strategic Planning Day in August.
- Researchers were engaged on three subjects: 1) Beat Carnival Archive, particularly focused on the St Patrick's Day event, with a view to further expanding the research of our practice generally; 2) Community Arts Workforce: issues, needs and development; 3) Carnival Centre Building Development to improve the building, its fabric, facilities and usability. The archive researcher was further engaged on Belfast St Patrick's Day consultation and the architectural researcher further engaged to draw up a plan proposal for making Beat's arts activity space more accessible. This resulted in important building works to create a wheelchair accessible entrance and a disabled-accessible toilet. The Beat Carnival Centre amenity is in a Super Output Area (Shankill 2) and much of Beat's activity benefited areas of high disadvantage. Beat employed the SPOTing European project Researcher, from our long-term arts team, to work with the partners, write case studies and produce a dissemination report.
- Three individual placements: one for the Prince's Trust, one a UU International Event Management student, another assisted Beat artists with Community Arts makes.

- We provided group placements for students from ArtEZ University of The Arts, Arnhem, Netherlands and hosted an educational visit by Surrey University International Events Management students to learn about our work and approach to events.
- Board development: significant Beat Carnival Board recruitment of two new members bringing specialist knowledge, experience and enthusiasm to the company included one whose first engagement had been as a programme participant.
- Stakeholder engagement continued on the direction of Beat Carnival’s next Strategy Plan.
- One of the many comments and endorsements received over the year is this from a Brazilian carnival performer, teacher and company/project organiser: "Belfast has what for me is the most complete carnival HQ outside Brazil that I have ever seen! Plus the organisation hosts culture from all over the world."

Beat Carnival was able to ascertain the value and effectiveness of its activity because it monitored details of participation and outcomes; gathered feedback from participants and audience; used agreed performance indicators; produced reports and commissioned external consultation services. 2022-2023 numbers all increased from the 2021-2022 year.

**Public Benefit Purposes**

- Beat Carnival’s charitable purpose as set out in the Articles is, in summary, to:
- advance public education, appreciation of and participation in carnival
- promote arts and culture by managing an Arts Resource Centre as a cultural and social amenity
- organising and delivering carnival events, arts workshops and other activities, events, performances and initiatives throughout the year
- providing tuition in creative design, constructional, textile and performance skills
- promoting cultural tourism and cultural exchange and opportunities for vocational and recreational purposes for all groups and abilities
- advance community development by engaging with and assisting voluntary and community groups and organisations to organise and participate in cultural, arts, leisure and heritage projects and initiatives
- to promote other charitable purposes so long as these purposes would be considered to be charitable under the law of Northern Ireland.

**Programme Participation & Audience, Targets and Performance**

Number of full-time equivalent staff	4
Number of short-term, contracted or freelance staff	131
Number of volunteers	76
Number of volunteer hours	602
Number of participant sessions	344
Number of individual participants	1,787
Number of Artists work / development sessions	1,620
Number of Performances / Events	31
Number of estimated audience-attendees	137,500
Number of visitors from outside NI	200
Number of online products (videos etc)	69
Number of known online audience-views	24,861

<b>CORE ANNUAL ARTS PROGRAMMES</b>		
1	BeatStyle	Tiny Beat & Junior Beat
2	Carnival School – Arts Education	Junior Carnival, What’s the Story? & SPOTing
3	Beat Carnival Music	BEATnDRUM, Brass Ensemble, Samba de Roda, Modern Rhythms Masterclasses & Community Music
4	Social Engagement, Events, Performances, Services	WTS?, Neighbourhood Carnivals, Arts Services, St Patricks Day & Events
<b>ARTS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES</b>		
5	The Way Forward	Partnerships, Research, Carnival Centre Development & Training
6	Networks	Island-wide & International for inspirational research, development and delivery

**1 Beatstyle**

- Children’s and young people’s multi-arts at Beat Carnival Centre
- Promoting wellbeing and emotional resilience, enabling our young people to express themselves in a creative and safe environment
- Projects are co-designed and co-directed by our young people and we constantly adapt and change programme to suit their wants and needs

**2 Carnival School**

- Junior Carnival expanded, reaching out to ‘disadvantaged communities’
- SPOTing delivered leadership training and consultation with young people
- Costume masterclass for yp
- Research into arts education methodology continued

**3 Beat Carnival Music including BEATnDRUM**

- Weekly training and rehearsals, mostly Samba drumming and music
- BEATmDRUM beginners’ classes
- Brass masterclass with Mr Wilson’s Secondliners
- 'Make Music Day' video produced

**4 Performances and Arts Services**

- Neighbourhood Spring Festival
- Sailortown Festival
- BEATnDRUM and Beat Artists performances in Belfast Mela, Maritime Festival, Lord Mayor's Day, Belfast Halloween events, Christmas Lights, ArtsEkta’s Mela Parade and in other places including Lisburn, Donegal, Ballycastle, Bangor, Antrim, Coleraine, Derry, Liverpool
- Green Spaces Dark Skies
- Our Place In Space
- Belfast St Patrick’s Day Parade
- University of Ulster Open Days
- 4 Halloween events
- 4 Christmas events
- Arts outreach across Belfast

**5 Artist Training and Carnival Artform development**

- Silk painting and carnival flags & banner making
- Carnival Rhythms Masterclasses
- Carnival costume making and backpack design
- Carnival float creation/development

## 6 Networks and International Participation

- International collaborations and relationship development included the Trans Europe Halles network and a meeting in Prague; TEH Arts Education Hub; TEH Cultural Transformation Project and Movement
- International Music project exploration with practitioners in Scotland, Metz France and Belgium; Samba connections and masterclass with a Pernambuco, Northeast Brazil percussion master
- A long-time Ukraine cultural partner visited Beat, facilitated by British Council. A significant meeting was held at Beat Carnival with the British Council Ukraine Office and Beat's Ukraine colleague. All are committed to developing collaboration in 2023-24
- North Belfast Arts Festival organising committee

Percentage of total programme that included particular categories of participants, % groups and individuals identified as usually 'missing out', that engaged in Beat Carnival programmes:

Participation Engagement	% of programme activity that involved individuals in these categories
People with a physical or mental impairment	100
Newcomer or ethnic minority people and groups	100
People living in deprived neighbourhoods	100
LGBTQ+ people	100
Older people (aged 65+)	50
Children and young people (aged 0-24)	80
Unemployed People	100

## STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

### **Nature of the Governing Document and Constitution of the Charity**

Beat Carnival is a registered Charity (NIC103347 and HMRC XR 82700) constituted as a Company limited by guarantee and is therefore governed by Articles of Association. The directors of the company are also trustees of the charity. Eligibility for membership of the charity, and membership of the board of trustees is governed by the Articles of Association.

### **Relationships Between the Charity and Related Parties, Including its Subsidiaries**

The charity has a social enterprise subsidiary (Beat Trading Ltd) with which it has many transactions and a controlling interest. The only other related parties are trustees and there are no transactions with them.

### **Company Operations and Project Management**

Beat has a long-term Strategic Plan and an annual Operational Plan. Its projects operate within that framework. Projects are managed through Project Plans with timelines and Project Teams. The project budget is monitored and adjusted as necessary to ensure that spend does not exceed the project income.

Beat produces detailed risk assessment for events.

Beat targets recruitment and publicity to ensure that a wide cross-section of people get involved in the company and its programmes.

Beat's Director presents a monthly financial report to the company Board. Beat operates separate cost centres on SAGE.

Beat's financial statements are subject to a full financial audit at the end of each financial year. Beat management and Board of Directors regularly review financial procedures. Beat operates procurement policy and has a select list of suppliers that is updated at the end of each financial year. Beat provides value for money by careful costing, recycling materials and having a high level of voluntary contribution.

Beat Carnival complies with legislative regulations laid out in Equal Opportunities legislation, the Disability Discrimination Act and the Children's Order, GDPR and other appropriate legislation. Beat Carnival Policies include: a Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy, a Health and Safety Policy, Community Relations Policy, Harassment Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy and Privacy Policy.

### **Staff Training**

Beat's youth programme manager completed an ILM Award Level 3 in Leadership and Management. This qualification is valuable for new, aspiring managers without formal training or qualifications that reflect their experience. Other staff training undertaken included: CO3 fundraising workshop; Recruit, Retrain, Reward; Managing Change; Discover your Leadership; Culture of Impact; Cultural Governance Conference.

### **Staff Changes**

The Carnival School Worker post finished (funding ended). This team member was employed in the weekly programme on a freelance basis. This provides valuable youth work expertise in our youth programme and staff team.

### **Risk Statement**

Further to the above management statements, the trustees identify the major risks to which the charity is exposed each financial year when preparing and updating a strategic plan, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the charity. The trustees then review any major risks that have been identified and establish systems to mitigate those risks. The charity is satisfied that the systems are in place to mitigate their exposure to the major risks that have been so identified and reviewed. The charity is open to the usual financial risks of any organisation, and the charity has introduced controls to minimise these risks, such as two signatures being required for payments from the bank account. In addition, the accounts are regularly explained to members of the charity and are open for member's inspection at any time. Identified risks include: Strategic, Financial, Governance, People, Reputation, IT and Data, Health & Safety, Assets.

### **The Beat Carnival Centre building**

There were issues of concern with repairs needed to Beat Carnival Centre, Northern Ireland's unique arts creation facility. We think the asset is an important, unique asset in the Northern Ireland and Belfast arts 'ecosystem' and should be safeguarded and developed for greater benefit. In this period we undertook further survey and assessment work including a drains survey of the site. Repairs were carried out to some of the widespread water ingress. The biggest improvement was in accessibility and inclusion, with creation of an automatic entrance from Gardener Street to the arts activity room and an adjacent disability accessible toilet.

## **FUTURE BUSINESS & PLANNING, ARTISTIC PLANNING & AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT**

- Produce new organisational plans and priorities
  - Strategic Plan to 2026
  - Succession Plan to 2025
  - Youth Programme Strategy and Development Plan to 2027
  - Artistic Development Plan 2024
  - Marketing / Audience Development Plan
  - Consider corporate structure changes that could benefit delivery of events and access to funding
- Artform and audience development
  - Plan evaluation sessions with artists on our Carnival Arts practice and ambitions; consult on and plan for artform development and new events in 2023 and 2024; have a Carnival Arts Development Week
  - Carnival arts Initiatives in four categories of public-facing and participatory arts: 1) Neighbourhood / North Belfast; 2) City; 3) Northern Ireland / out of Belfast; 4) International.

- Continue to provide specialist artform performance at community / neighbourhood places.
- Embed environmental priorities and practices in carnival and outdoor arts construction and presentation
- Lead Northern Ireland hub of 'Beach of Dreams', UK & Ireland creative climate awareness major programme, for 2024 and 2025
- Empower young people, increase the leadership and self-organising roles of yp
  - Organise a significantly enhanced Youth Programme, building on current weekly provision
  - Allocate a specific room within the Carnival Centre for yp's self-organised use
- Form new collaborations for a major outdoor spectacles and events, a wide range of arts, community development, social activist and environmental expertise including main partners:
  - W5 / Odyssey Trust
  - QUB Sonic Arts Research Centre
  - QUB Centre for Sustainability, Equality and Climate Action
  - Fighting Words NI
  - Retinize digital, VR
  - Kinetika, London
  - Donna Fox Associates, England midlands
- Maintain European partner projects. Participate in GB, European, international events
  - Arts Education Hub
  - Cultural Transformation Project and Movement
  - Ukraine cultural platform
  - Maintain relationships and potential for collaborations
  - Seek alternative means to resource international relationships and working, now that UK is ineligible for EU funding
- Organise a Beat Carnival 30th Anniversary celebration festival, September 2023