

Annual Report and Public Benefit of the Trustees of Down Community Arts for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

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About the charity

Registration, registered office and correspondence address

CCNI registration number	103607
Company registration number	NI 027833
Address and registered office	2-6 Irish Street Downpatrick Co Down BT30 6BP

Trustees who served during year ending 31 March 2024 were:

Claire-Rose Canavan (Secretary)
Anne Hanna
Brenda Kent (Chair)
Margaret Ritchie
Emma Whjtehead
Vera Woods

We employ one, full time, member of staff, our Project Manager Philip Campbell.

Governance

Down Community Arts is incorporated under our governing documents, a Memorandum and Articles of Association, which set out its purpose and powers. This was last updated and approved by the members and Trustees in October 2017.

The trustees are appointed by the members of the charity. No other body or individual has the power to nominate or appointment trustees.

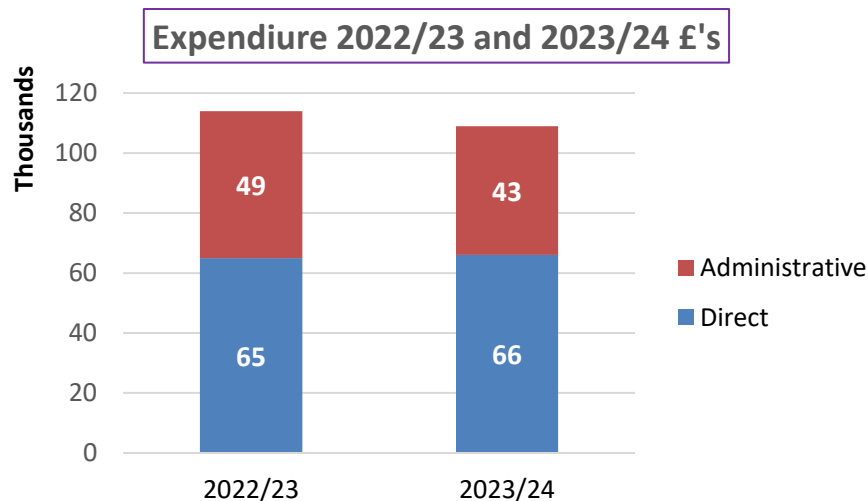
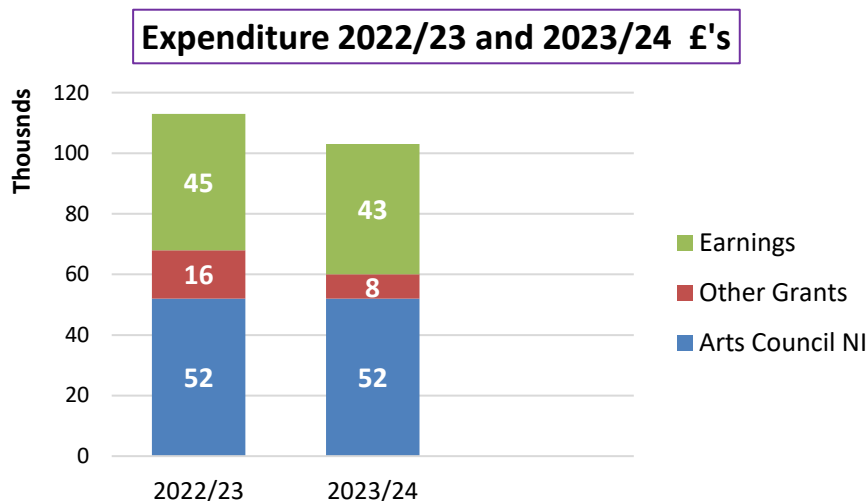
Purpose

The charity's purpose is to promote, maintain and improve the arts for the benefit of the inhabitants of County Down and its wider communities, without distinction of sex, race or of political, religious or other opinions and to develop public appreciation of such art by associating together the inhabitants, the local authorities and other organisations in a common effort to advance the education of such inhabitants.

Financial review

This is a summary review of the charity's financial position at the end of the year. Details are in our annual accounts, prepared by an independent examiner and filed with CCNI.

Our income fell by 8% over the year and we incurred an operating deficit (£6,973) which has had an impact on our unrestricted reserves impacting our ability to continue to offer free services.



Public benefit report

In setting our objectives and annual programme of activities for the year past, the trustees of Down Community Arts took the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's statutory guidance on public benefit into full account, so that the activities delivered should contribute to achieving the charity's purposes and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries. Our report for 2023/2024 shows that the charity created considerable public benefit in furtherance of its charitable purposes.

Our activities

2023/24 Programme – Person and Place

In 2023/24 DCA celebrated 30 years of community arts delivery and the roll out of its new five year strategy. This has four key aims for growth.

1. **Inclusive audience development** - enabling people to discover, engage in and develop their arts journey – this will reach across all rural areas of NMD.
2. **Quality arts development** - enabling artists to stay in or enter the sector and grow by working with community partners to embed arts in communities, enabling them to express culture and place make with quality public facing art.
3. **Impactful community development** - enabling arts to 'stick' by linking to it's the communities' creative roots and traditions, engaging across the generations and their showcasing work to build community pride.
4. **Sustainable development** - building our capacity to support arts and artists by adding to our team and skills, our geographic and demographic reach, our public profile and role in sharing learning to inspire others

Our strategy sets out key activities in pursuit of these aims. Our artistic programme for 2023/24 focuses on several of these:

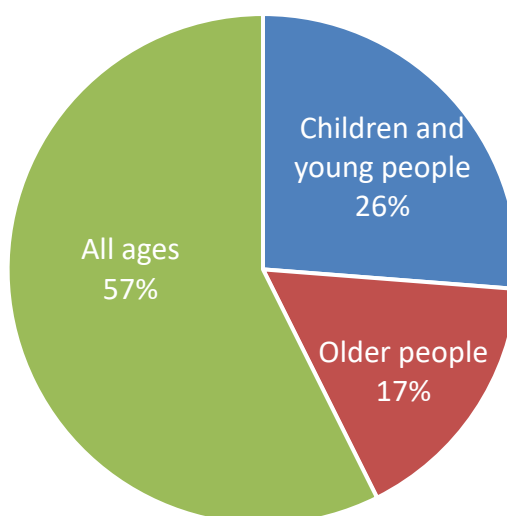
- **Engaging people** in art through a range of community-centred projects and **embedding practice** through artists and community partners working together.
- Enabling communities to make top-quality public-facing art, such as murals or installations, that speak of and about their place - **placemaking** and expressing community pride.
- **Supporting arts careers by** enabling artists to stay in the sector and grow through longer-term contracts, fair hourly or project-based rates, identifying training needs and attracting new artists to the community arts sector
- Running a place and people-based initiative enabling communities to explore their **community's art roots** –connections to creative and art traditions, skills and arts heritage.
- Enabling participants from across all strands of our work to celebrate their creativity and their community by making their work accessible to the wider public so building **community pride**

A snap shot of our outputs

610 participants
500 hours of face to face artist contact time
14 Locations worked in
26 artists employed
14 community partners

Newtownhamilton
Downpatrick
Strangford
Killyleagh
Dundrum
Newry
Kilkeel
Silverbridge
Hilltown
Burren
Drumaness
Saintfield
Ballyhornan
Saul

We engaged 610 people



Our beneficiaries

Down Community Arts supported people's journey into art through **discovery, engagement and development.**

DCA achieved this by delivering activity bringing art to the community. This meant reaching out across our varied geography and communities offering a wide choice of art forms and expanding our strong arts offering.

Discovery

In 2023/24 DCA delivered **500** hours of artist contact time across NMADDC's **7** District Electoral Areas (DEA) and, engaged with **14** community groups with a further **6** for inclusion in the St Patricks Day Parade.

Engagement

Our ambition was to strengthen and develop our relationships with artists and communities through the consistent delivery of projects. The process of artist and community collaboration through co-design underpinned the values DCA places within its artistic planning, outputs and outcomes. This enabled people to discover arts in their community and provide equality of access in rural areas achieved through continued collaboration with:

- Newry Mourne and Down Councils DEA Coordinators
- Burren Men's Shed
- Hilltown Community Association
- Cumann Gaelach Leath Chathail
- Ballyhornan Family Centre
- C'mon Women
- Saintfield Development Association
- Ballynahinch Community Collective
- Creative Village Dundrum
- Drumaness Community Association
- Newtownhamilton Men's Shed
- Oliver Plunkett YC

Development

As a result of the success of 2023/24 DCA will:

- Continue supporting people and communities in their journey into art
- Support artist employment through increased project delivery
- Maintain a sustained community presence through the continuation of community partnership established in 2023/24
- Provide regular access to quality arts experiences

Our achievements

We succeeded in increasing access to the benefits of community arts by

- Producing high quality artistic outcomes
- Maintaining programming in hard to reach areas across Newry Mourne and Down
- Working in partnership with new community organisations and groups

- engaging in more festivals and with partners to bring arts more people than last year
- keeping to zero or nominal fees across all projects
- developing new ways of working and sourcing funds to sustain access into future years

Feedback shows that people who took part in our programmes benefited by

- gaining education and learning in relation to a specific art form, their own talents and tastes or their community
- building their confidence to create something, to work with others, or to speak out about their own experience or aspirations
- meeting new people and came together with others around a common interest

Our work benefitted the arts by

- providing experience, income and connections to 26 artists
- making over a dozen different art forms accessible to local communities
- providing positive experiences of arts to 610 people of all ages
- demonstrating the value of the arts to local public, private and third sector non-arts organisations

Our impact

Our outcomes during the year made important contributions to long term goals for individuals, communities and the arts in society.

Inclusion for all in the arts

We are proud that over a quarter (70%) of all participants across all of our projects were from rural communities and often remote from arts and community activity. By running groups in which people of ages and backgrounds were welcome we made a contribution to tackling loneliness and social exclusion.

Wellbeing

We enabled individuals to learning new things, explore their talents, notice the world about them and meet other people. As well as the direct benefits of education, enjoyment and social engagement, all these effects are also known to promote physical, mental and social wellbeing.

Effective communities

We brought people together and contributed to them gaining insight, confidence, connections and understanding that can support them to make change in their lives and communities. Through our projects particularly through our engagement in the St Patricks Day Parade we helped people find something positive in their local community. By working with partner organisations and contributing to community pride we built local assets and added to the capacity for community development.

A society that values the arts

We gave people a positive experience of the arts, especially young people who are still forming their attitudes to the world. This makes a contribution to building a society that values the arts because people are more likely to value and support something of which they have had a good experience. We also worked with non-arts partners and demonstrated to them the value of the arts in making positive change in communities.

Ensuring access to the public

We strive to ensure that no body and no group of people are excluded from the benefits of our work. The majority of our activities are free and a few have a nominal charge in the interests of administration and sustainability. We use accessible premises wherever possible and adapt our work as we need to each person's requirements. We purposefully choose to work with communities in rural areas, that have little access to arts activities or are excluded from other arts or which, through age, disability, identity or income, have limited access to mainstream art or community provision.

Ensuring that private benefit is incidental

We created paid work for 26 individual artists during the year, each of whom benefited from a fee and possibly by gaining skills, experience and an improved cv. Such benefit to individual artists is essential to delivering out public benefit and entirely incidental to it.

Signed by Trustee

Name Brenda Kent

Date

Signature



Our thanks

We are grateful to the following Down Community Arts artists, partners, funders and collaborators

Artists who worked with us

Leontia Haldenby
Caroline Shimmons
Melissa McKee
Heather McDermott
Kieron Black
Olivia Murphy
Rob Galbraith
Lisa Murray
Alison McGrenaghan
Judith O'Neill
Rena Rohipoor
Jim Russell
Cheryl Martin
Linda Kelly
Matthew Knowles
Conor McGinley
Alison Lowry
Sharlene Oldroyd
Charlene Rooney
Jonny McKerr
Kieran Fitzsimons
Ciara McCrickard
Stephen Rooney
Mark Higgins
Donna O'Neill
Aine McKenna

Community partners who commissioned and collaborated to make art happen

Newtown Craft Group
YMCA Newcastle
Burren Men's Shed
C'mon women Kilkeel
St Josephs Primary (Strangford)
St Colmcilles Primary (Downpatrick)
Our lady and St Patrik's Primary (Downpatrick)
Dundrum Creative Village
Drumaness Community Association
County Down Rural Community Network
Newry Mourne and Down District Council
Killyleagh Integrated Primary
Ballyhornan Family Centre
Hilltown Community Association
Downpatrick RGU
Oliver Plunkett YC
Cumann Gaelach Leath Chathail

Funders

Arts Council of Northern Ireland
Newry Mourne & Down District Council