

**Northern Ireland Piping and
Drumming School**

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2023**

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of 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

Objectives and aims

The objectives of the Company are the advancement of musical education, in theory and practice in the art of Bagpipe playing, Snare Drumming and Bass and Tenor Drumming as well as Highland Dance, Drum Majoring and Special Needs Tuition.

Significant activities

Now that we have freed ourselves from the Coronavirus pandemic we have to start and pick up the pieces, rebuild confidence and continue to move forward.

The cost of the pandemic has created major problems throughout society, including the cost-of-living crisis, which has resulted in significant cost increases for us in the rent of school premises and Insurance. We have had to manage this on a stand still budget initially, although we did receive an uplift award in funding towards the end of the Financial Year from the Arts Council for Northern Ireland which was greatly appreciated.

This uplift in funding enabled us to purchase additional laptop computers for the tutors who did not have a laptop as well as printers for the administration team, it also enabled us to purchase ensemble music licenses to use with both students and tutors as an aid to transforming music into the digital format, we see this as a positive step in moving forward, we already have our music books on Google classroom which should also drive down on the cost of printing.

Following the lockdown period of the pandemic, and the return to normal classes, some students have elected to continue using the online teaching platform rather than to go back to face-to-face teaching. This online teaching facility is still relevant and under continuous development which allows the school to cater for those students who are unable to attend normal classes.

We were able to again open the Dungannon School in Ranfurly House and to run classes as normal this year on a face-to-face basis which have been successful. Two of the tutors proposed taking this a stage further and engaging with a local primary school and setting up an afterschool club for both piping and drumming and this initiative has proved very successful and has now spread to two other schools in the area with demand on the rise.

We have received positive feedback from all the primary schools involved and will continue to build on this initiative. We, as a board, see this as a positive way forward to expanding the school significantly.

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The special needs element of the school continues to make progress with demand steadily increasing. These classes have returned to a face-to face basis and with the expected increased demand in this sector there will be a need for additional funding. Funding opportunities are continuously explored, and plans and applications are currently being progressed, in conjunction with Arts and Business.

We have been able to forge a link with The National Piping Centre in Glasgow which will enable our students to take Piping and Drumming Qualifications Board (PDQB) through the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) examinations if they wish to do so.

The Highland dance classes continue at Enniskillen have commenced again on a face-to-face following the pandemic; there appears to be great enthusiasm and interest; hence we have had an increase in students which is very encouraging.

The Ensemble has been slow to get off the ground, due to the disruption caused by the pandemic; we are actively seeking funding to progress this element of the school, as we, both the board and the tutors, see this as a vital element of the school, giving the students an outlet to demonstrate their newly found skills.

Sub Committees

The list below shows the activities Board Members and Tutors have been involved with.

Finance

Online Teaching

London College of Music and Scottish Qualification Authority (PDQB)

Special Needs Schools

School Ensemble

Each committee would have a chair who would report on progress to the Board.

Conclusion

This has been another difficult year, due to the cost-of-living crisis and still some stigma from the coronavirus pandemic, however, we have made progress and continue to grow our student base. Funding is key to developing the school further and we need to explore how to address this with various funders to cater for the increase demand especially for the ensemble and special needs segments of the school.

The development in the outreach work in the Dungannon area has been the most encouraging and significant outcome in this current year and we hope to expand on this in the future. we hope to develop this further, in other geographical areas.

Students are encouraged to take external examinations as well as the school examinations, with one student at the Dungannon school achieving GCSE in music playing the bagpipes, this is great motivation for the younger students.

The link with The National Piping Centre in Glasgow will give our students and tutors access to examinations in Piping and Drumming Qualifications (PDQB) within the Scottish Qualification Authority.

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OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Public benefit

The trustees confirm that they have had due regard to guidance produced by the Commission regarding Public benefit.

Our beneficiaries are both children and young people aged 8-25 years and the general public in Northern Ireland without distinction of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability/ability, race, ethnic origin, political, religious or other opinion.

We have 4 charitable purposes:

- 1) The advancement of musical education, theory and practice in the art of Bagpipe Playing and Snare Drumming;
- 2) the promotion of arts, heritage and culture;
- 3) to provide or assist in the provision of facilities in the interests of social welfare with the objective of improving the conditions of life for the inhabitants; and
- 4) any other charitable purposes.

Our purposes interlink with each other and therefore the benefits will overlap between purposes:

1. Through the provision of teaching, instruction, examination, training, performance, production, practice and the study of highland piping and drumming the beneficiaries will learn new musical skills and will also be able to seek accreditation through graded certification as their musical proficiency increases. This is evidenced by the number of students who attend our classes and the number of students that progress through the eight grades of progressive learning for piping and drumming. For example, the students can attain certification for our own NIPDS certificates, PDQB, SQA, and London College of Music (LCM).

2. The direct benefit which flows from the promotion of Arts, heritage and culture is that the public's knowledge and understanding of the highland bagpipe, snare, bass and tenor drums as well as highland dancing and related musical and artistic activities will be improved, and they will be able to enjoy and understand these traditional musical artforms through various performances. NIPDS puts great emphasis on not only performance and musical understanding but also the history and culture appreciation of Scottish, Irish and Breton music. So, it is our hope that these musical artforms will be preserved for generations to come. This will be evidenced through the number of additional activities that take place in promotion of the benefit of the inhabitants.

3. The direct benefit that will come from being able to advance any other exclusively charitable purpose in connection with the art of Highland piping and drumming and other related musical, cultural and artistic activities in which the directors will have scope to pursue for charitable purposes in the future.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial position

The Charity had incoming resources of £55,507 for the year ended 31 March 2023. Expenditure for the year was £53,297 which resulted in net surplus of £2,210. The Charity had net assets of £25,047 as at the financial year end.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

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STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

Northern Ireland Piping and Drumming School actively promote a board of trustees which include a range of skills, experience and knowledge. They advertise and interview eligible candidates to be potential trustees of the board.

Successful candidates arising from interviews are eligible for nomination to the board. The trustees are elected at the annual general meeting by the members present in person, or through an authorised representative or by proxy.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 13 November 2023 and signed on its behalf by:



W F Carlisle - Trustee