

New Belfast Community Arts Initiative
t/a
Community Arts Partnership
Trustees' Annual Report
for the year ending 31 December 2022

The Directors have pleasure in submitting their annual report together with the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2022

Community Arts Partnership's work

New Belfast Community Arts Initiative is a company limited by guarantee whose objects are recognised as charitable by HM Revenue & Customs. New Belfast Community Arts Initiative trading as t/a Community Arts Partnership is a registered charity (XR 36570) and a company limited by guarantee (Northern Ireland NI 37645) and is registered with the Northern Ireland Charity Commission (NIC 105169).

Our Mission is

To take the lead in the promotion, development and delivery of community arts practice, to affect positive change.

Our vision is

To see the emergence of a just, inclusive, peaceful and creative society, where difference is welcomed and participation is valued.

We have a two-fold approach to arts development:

- firstly supporting access and participation by seeking to affect policy through advocacy and leadership and
- secondly, promoting authorship and ownership through the active engagement in projects and programmes.

We offer a platform for policy consultation and development, whilst at the same time, develop new creative opportunities for artists, communities and individuals through:

- Arts workshop programme
- Arts workshop services
- Advocacy
- Information
- Research
- Platforms for networking and sharing experiences
- Professional training
- Other initiatives to promote engagement

We design and implement projects across the region, and develop partnerships and networks at local, national and international level. Moreover, we provide

information, research and professional training services for the whole community arts sector and assume a prominent role in advocating it.

- 37 groups across 4 art form areas on our community programme
- 20 groups on our inter-community programme
- 20 groups places on our inter-ability Side by Side programme
- 54 schools places programmed on our Poetry in Motion in Schools programme
- 15 Poet in residence projects on our Poetry in Motion Community
- new pieces of public art in community
- international poetry salon 'Lit Up'
- over 5,500 workshop and event participants and 7,400 support responses made

Community Arts Partnership continues to:

- act as central point of contact for community arts sector
- provide an advocacy role for community arts sector
- provide an on-line digest of current news, issues and opportunities for the widest arts sector
- provide community arts weekly and monthly e-bulletins
- provide and grow research base for community arts in N Ireland
- assist in funding clinics
- develop new international partners
- develop new regional partnerships
- provide fora for advocacy, advice and creative support to support engagement with ArtsMatterNI campaign
- establish on-going local, national and international research and development programmes

Advocacy

Community Arts Partnership (CAP) is committed to fulfil a prominent advocacy role in N Ireland for community arts. We promote the profile and the status of the sector, and aim to inform policy and resource allocation decisions within public institutions.

We advocate for the sector through:

- contact with Government, councils, arts authorities, centres of learning, community groups, arts organisations and artists, healthcare organisations (both statutory and private);
- fora for advocacy, learning and cultural development,
- Hosting and convening the ArtsMatterNI campaign on behalf of the widest arts sector
- providing information and research about provision and positive impacts of community arts on society;
- attending and hosting events providing opportunities for networking and sharing experiences;
- public talks;
- acting as a central point of contact for the community arts sector

- CEO continued his membership of the ministerial Covid Recovery Taskforce
- CEO is member of NICVA hosted Developing Governance Group along with third sector leaders
- CEO inducted into Oracle European Cultural Network

Information services

Community Arts Partnership gathers and disseminates information about / relevant to the community arts/arts sector with a focus on N Ireland. This information includes news, issues, initiatives and opportunities (e.g. funding, training, work, volunteering). We achieve this via our Information Unit, producing the weekly and the monthly e-news bulletins: Both grew to over 4,200 weekly subscribers in year and total hits on the website within the calendar year grew to well over 12 million.

Research

Community Arts Partnership provides and grows a research base for community arts in N Ireland. We collaborate with other organisations in order to ensure that research is relevant to the sector, and complement and integrate existing research activities. Research papers have been produced and disseminated at local, national and international level.

Platforms for networking and sharing experiences

We organised a variety of online initiatives focussing on community arts, including conferences and symposia in order to offer opportunities for networking, sharing experiences, facilitating and prompting debates. Local, national and international practitioners took part.

Partnership Working

We are committed to partnership working across all our services, as we believe in the synergy resulting from this approach. We will value existing partnerships and seek new local, regional and international collaborations in community arts. Through our partnership work, we will develop projects and initiatives with community arts organisations, centres of learning and advocacy groups in Ireland, Britain and beyond.

The ARC

The ARC – the Arts Resource Centre has been operational since 2016, providing an accessible, safe and well-provisioned space for communities and individuals to seek facilities to host and engage in creativity. CAP's Arts Resource Centre (ARC) connects many opportunities for the arts sector and communities of place and interest across the city of Belfast and beyond, spanning the whole of Northern Ireland and increasing the capacity of community-based arts in so doing. Given the pandemic, our premises were underutilised however we maintained staff cover in the premises, with the balance working from home.

COVID 19

In Community Arts Partnership, we understand how important it is to work safely and support our employees', facilitators' and participants' health and

wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic and not contribute to the spread of the virus. We continued to adhere to 4 layers of guidance with specific considerations for operations in a range of environments, for a particular project and in the ARC workplace. We have a duty of care to workers, volunteers and non-professionals, to ensure as far as reasonably practicable they are not exposed to unnecessary risks to their health and safety. The measures adopted minimised risks around working safely during COVID-19 and ensured that everyone was afforded the same level of protection to their health and safety as others.

We developed a range of procedural initiatives to cope with the changing and demanding health environment and followed our continuing strategy to navigate hopefully beyond the pandemic through our revised strategic business plan, RADAR: Respond - Adapt - Develop and Re-Imagine:

Significantly, CAP continued to develop digital capacity to support renewal, with the help of various funders, principally the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. The capital secured means that CAP will be able to continue to deliver in a safer and more Covid-secure environment for participants and private hire. We see this as critical to our maximising new and existing assets, as we build for the future, for our artists, facilitators and the communities they support.

Whilst economic and health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have been far from symmetrical across all age groups, current evidence suggests that young people are less at-risk in terms of developing severe physical health symptoms linked to COVID-19 than older age cohorts (WHO, 2020). We continue to face disruption in accessing schools directly. Other age cohorts, like the elderly or those in nursing care, or indeed COVID-19 vulnerable groups such as BAME populations and the clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) have required greater levels of careful support.

In the context of ageing populations, considerations about intergenerational solidarity and social justice will become increasingly prevalent and have already been bubbling up in creative policy making, long before the pandemic struck. These considerations are likely to gain further traction, as the repercussions of the pandemic and governments response to it, unfold over the coming months and years.

OECD evidence demonstrates that the pandemic has hit vulnerable groups disproportionately and is likely to exacerbate existing inequalities (see (OECD, 2020[1]), (OECD, 2020[2]) and (OECD, 2020[3])). The impact of the crisis on young people and across different age cohorts, as well as its implications for energising intergenerational solidarity and justice is huge. Intersecting identity factors, such as sex, gender, race, ethnicity, and intellectual or physical disability, and socio-economic disadvantage may exacerbate the vulnerability of our communities to bounce back. For Community Arts Partnership, given the profile of our client organisations and participants, it will be all the more necessary to respond, adapt and reimagine not only our internal organisational capacity, safety and focus, but our outward delivery processes and respond as advocates for our client communities of interest, age and place.

Community Arts Partnership has continued to develop digital abilities within our sector, maintaining digital programming of 54 schools to take part in Poetry in Motion in Schools and another 15 writers groups across Northern Ireland digitally facilitated through interactive workshops and masterclasses throughout the year. We have also supported 9 care homes and centres since producing video presentations across visual arts, craft, movement and design. CAP has proven that in this phase we can successfully engage using the digital media. The opportunity now is to build upon that in the next phase so that at a further horizon, we can re-imagine what the organisation can achieve.

Indeed, our main funders also assisted in supporting the additional capital need to fully translate our programme into a digital delivery model. Whilst additional investment in equipment has been considerable, the pressures on revenue budgets became even greater given the additional time that all aspects of programme delivery incurred. Significant expenditure in this regard has led to a deficit that will need to be constantly monitored as we progress.

The impact of the pandemic on the social, emotional and physical well-being of our community continued to be felt. CAP has always striven to support the most marginalised socio-economically within our community and has maintained and grown levels of support for our artist-facilitators, assisting in application development and work assignments across NI.

Disruption

The ongoing disruption in schools and community centres continued to affect our children and vulnerable populations and has significantly changed how we all live, learn and create during the pandemic and perhaps beyond. Some of the innovative teaching and learning tools and delivery systems schools and teachers experimented with, in the response to the crisis, may have a long-lasting impact on education systems. We have also supported 9 care homes and centres through producing video presentations across visual arts, craft, movement and design, and engaging via online communications platforms.

As the situation shifts to a more settled community facing landscape, CAP endeavours to remain focused on the needs of our client groups and the wider sector. In order to do so, we require financial stabilisation and ongoing investment.

The focus of CAPs RADAR plan has assisted the organisation progress programmatically, shifting our focus to operational continuity to include embracing a return to a more broad series of diverse stakeholder engagements and outcomes, but the transition is still financially and operationally very demanding.

- Whilst we have had encouraging support from agencies and funders, the challenge to support our creatives teams, staff and stakeholders is all the more difficult in the current funding environment. The lack of a local Assembly continues to hamper access to monitoring rounds.

- We are developing new revenue streams through digital enterprise and business development.
- We will continue to enjoy the expanded role of digital engagement and factor that research into our engagement, information and advocacy delivery.

Managing Expectations

Recovery of opportunities and participation continues to be our priority. Understanding the resource and indeed health fears that our community clients are grappling with—and how their expectations for personal and collective safety and security have changed, perhaps permanently—is a central critical consideration for our programme, to slowly restore confidence and reimagine a new path forward.

Key Short Term Considerations:

- Identifying substantial opportunities in maintaining services and connections across all projects and services
- Seeking further financial support
- Stabilising organisational viability

Key Medium Term Considerations:

- • With continuing curtailment of face to face community creative activity of the past year, the organisation continues to assess changes in client group behaviours and preferences.
- • We have slowly reconnected with client organisations, albeit with enhanced new aspects of delivery and services through our extended digital capacity.
- • We have grasped the new remote service delivery processes, which are oftentimes safer, more convenient and in some respects, less expensive given the back drop of increasing inflation on all aspects of programme delivery and operations. -
- • The inflation crisis has to some extent been mitigated by shifting areas of programming to digital platforms, but operational costs of heating, lighting, etc, continue to increase at worrying levels.
- Alignment of key revenue generation continues to demand some resetting of expectations and development of business development strategy, especially looking at advanced use of digital sales via website, paid for online performances and events, physically safe in house performances workshops and roundtables. .
- The critical ongoing consideration remains to be the sufficiency of funding and revenue to maintain delivery and operations during recovery over the next 12 to 24 months. Staying alert to these external forces and expanding the board of trustees for counsel and advice will remain critical to ongoing sustainability.
- With the pace of change accelerating in technology, putting the organisation on a path to constant and ever-growing investment in digital, new patterns of working practice are emerging, however we are seeing a blending of remote and face-to-face working to avoid tech dependency.

We continue to prioritise digital investments and processes of delivery. The ARC – our HQ has seen lots of change – but we believe that at some point, given the uptick in face to face working, that pre-pandemic levels of creative and performance space rentals will recover.

CAP's project work represents the most extensive community-based and sectoral leading suite of services for community groups, professional and voluntary organisations to engage in culturally democratic artistic disciplines, facilitated by artists, created by participants and celebrated by community. We endeavour to redouble our efforts in this regard.

We ask that our funders continue to have confidence in CAP and trust us to continue to offer pragmatic, timely and sensitive leadership to community arts professional, participants and commissioners and also the wider creative and indeed voluntary sector.

Governance & Management Structure

New Belfast Community Arts Initiative was established in 1999 as a company limited by guarantee registered in Northern Ireland NI 37645 with a Memorandum & Articles of Association, amended in June 2011, whose objects have been recognised as charitable by HM Revenue & Customs under reference XR 36570. From July 2011, New Belfast Community Arts Initiative adopted the identity Community Arts Partnership (ie trading as), registered with HMRC.

Management Committee, Trustees:

The Management Committee is collectively responsible for setting the strategic aims and objectives of the organisation; shaping and determining the organisation's policies and policy direction in order to ensure it fulfils its charitable objects; ensuring accountability to members and key stakeholders; delivering good governance and ensuring compliance with all legal requirements and financial regulations in accordance with Charity and Company Law.

Responsibilities:

Vision and Leadership

- To be committed to the vision, mission and values of Community Arts Partnership.
- To provide strategic direction for the new organisation, including agreeing/reviewing strategic plans.
- To keep informed of the activities of the organisation and the wider issues that affect its work.
- To ensure appropriate risk management strategies are established and implemented.
- To ensure the work of the organisation is monitored and evaluated.
- To ensure the governance of the organisation adheres to the principles set out in the Code of Good Governance for the Voluntary & Community Sector in NI.

Accountability

- To ensure the organisation complies with its Memorandum and Articles of Association (Constitution)
- To ensure the organisation keeps to the law, including charity and company law.
- To ensure the organisation is a responsible employer and adheres to legislation.
- To ensure the organisation makes efficient use of resources, in particular that all monies are applied to its objects, agreed plans and budgets.

Financial Oversight

- To understand the financial position of the organisation.
- To ensure the appropriate financial controls are implemented and the finances are properly managed.
- To ensure adequate financial resources are in place for the organisation.
- To ensure the organisation is properly insured against all reasonable liabilities.

Meetings of the Board of Trustees/Management Committee

- Full Management Committee meetings take place quarterly
- A Sub-committee, the Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GP) is made up of Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer and is attended by the Director/Company Secretary. Meetings take place every 4/5 weeks and report to the subsequent Full Management Committee meeting
- The agenda for Full Management Committee meetings will focus on e.g.: matters arising from the last meeting and interim F&GP meetings; current issues; plans for the future; proposed policy changes; review of progress in various areas; monitoring/review against operational objectives and strategic plan; financial reports; project reports; and other reports from the Director
- Any Trustee may request, through the Chairperson, that a particular item be put on the agenda.
- If a Trustee is absent from three consecutive meetings without apologies they may be deemed by the Board as ceasing to hold office.
- The Director/Company Secretary attends the meetings and gives information, advice and the view of the Staff Team.
- The Director is accountable to the Management Committee through the Chairperson.
- Other staff members are eligible to attend the meetings as follows:
 - at the request of the Director/Company Secretary;
 - at the request of the Management Committee;
 - where a staff member makes a formal request to the Management Committee to attend a meeting and that request is granted.
- A maximum of 12 trustees can be appointed. In 2022 we had 3 plus a company secretary.

Qualities and Skills Preferred.

- Strong interest in community arts.
- Live and share the values of the Community Arts Partnership
- Good leadership skills and a track record of having operated at a strategic level.
- Awareness of voluntary & community sector.
- Previous experience of management committee work.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
- Impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences
- Good grasp of policy and funding issues
- Excellent technical skills

Day to day operational management is delegated to Conor Shields, Chief Executive and Company Secretary of New Belfast Community Arts Initiative trading as Community Arts Partnership, who is responsible for operational, financial and strategic management under the direction of the Management Committee approved budget. As of December 2022 personnel comprised Gordon Hewitt as Information and Policy Manager and Josh Schultz as Development Manager. Furthermore there is a project team of freelance project

contractors, a website/publications co-ordinator and over 200 artist placements, also on a freelance contracted basis.

Risk Assessment

Community Arts Partnership defines risk as the threat that an action or event will adversely affect its ability to achieve its current and future objectives through various areas/activities:

- governance;
- operations;
- finances;
- environmental or external factors such as public opinion or relationship with funders;
- compliance with law or regulation

The identification and management of risks affecting Community Arts Partnership ability to achieve its objectives are key responsibilities of all employees and committee members.

The effective management of risk is an important means by which Community Arts Partnership achieves its goals. To that end, Community Arts Partnership's policy is to:

- a. maintain and regularly review a central risk register
- b. manage risk actively across the full scope of CAP operations
- c. ensure each member of staff is aware of his or her responsibility
- d. integrate risk management with planning and budgeting to ensure that risk is taken fully into account in all aspects of Community Arts Partnership strategic and operational business
- e. develop an understanding of a risk-aware approach to working
- f. provide and maintain guidance on the techniques of risk assessment and risk management
- g. monitor and report regularly and frequently to the board on the management of risk and keep policy and practice under review

Individual projects are subject to an individual assessment process through which co-ordinators and facilitators meet with participants to explore issues. References are sought for all new staff and other personnel and in the event of project work involving young people or vulnerable adults, clearance checks are undertaken through the Access NI system, as a registered body.

CAP also operates policies and procedures in these areas:

- COVID19
- Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection (as an AccessNI accredited Registered Body)
- Environmental
- Equal Opportunities
- Expenses
- Health and Safety

- Risk including data protection
- Financial Probity
- Ethical Funding

Related Bodies

CAP's Chief Executive, Conor Shields continues his role on the Ministerial Culture Arts and Heritage Recovery Taskforce to assist in the ongoing rehabilitation of the sector in turbulent times.

CAP has representation on the Belfast Visual Arts' Forum and Belfast Festivals' Forum, hosted by Belfast City Council. CAP's CEO has accepted the invitation to join the pan-European Oracle Network, administrated by the Marcel Hicter Foundation in Brussels.

CAP has always enjoyed a close working relationship with its principal funder the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and indeed the governing department, DfC (Dept for Communities).

Financial Review

The Statement of Financial Activities describes New Belfast Community Arts Initiative trading as Community Arts Partnership's income, expenditure and funds for the year. The Income of £302,589 was down on the previous year. Overall expenditure showed some staffing increases on the previous year. This reflects the further displacements due to our response to Covid-19. Such a deficit will require very close monitoring in the immediate and medium term, although cash at hand remains sufficient to assuage any trading risk.

The year reflected the ongoing pattern of programming across the year and the region.

Income received was split between restricted income (mostly grants from Northern Ireland based funders) of £234,989 and unrestricted income to support areas, including funds designated to programme delivery, of £95,545 with £19,285 in social economy project work, signalling a clear improvement in operating conditions.

Our principal funder, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, contributed £204,953 through a range of exchequer and project funding.

Belfast City Council continued to contribute Core Multi-Annual Funding and project support.

The Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin also contributed £25,339, the majority of which had been deferred until this year given difficulties with Covid-19. This funding is to expand Poetry in Motion Schools into the Republic of Ireland.

CAP also received significant capital investment for equipment.

Reserves

Contingent liability is always of concern: CAP has 3 permanent employees and 6 part time freelance co-ordinators. This presents an additional contingent liability in terms of potential redundancy approaching over £60,000. Suggested

best practice around the retention of reserves by ACEVO and indeed NICVA is 3/4 months turnover, which in our case amounts to c. £75,000+. At this time, we have no significant pension liabilities to report. However, we currently do not command adequate fund reserves to mitigate our contingent liabilities and the organisation is struggling to augment its ability to fund these financial risks and indeed a range of risks that cannot be foreseen, as has been highlighted by the impact of the global pandemic on our day to day working.

Public Benefit

New Belfast Community Arts Initiative t/a Community Arts Partnership identifies its charitable objects as:

- (1) to advance public education and stimulate and educate interest in the Arts for the benefit of the public and communities in N Ireland and elsewhere (the "area of benefit"), particularly but not exclusively, by any or all of the following means:
 - (a) promoting, organising and publicising cultural and arts activities, events, performances, workshops, initiatives and exhibitions;
 - (b) encouraging appreciation for and the participation in community arts and the creative arts by people in the area of benefit through the provision of information, publications, advice, support, training and facilities
 - (c) providing advocacy on behalf of the arts sector, particularly relating to community arts
- (2) To advance community development by engaging with and assisting such groups and organisations, that have a genuine interest in furthering the Objects of the Charity, to organise and participate in cultural and arts projects and initiatives.
- (3) The provision of facilities and amenities for recreation and other leisure-time occupation within N Ireland with the object of improving the conditions of life of members of the public having need of such facilities by reasons of their age, sex, youth, disabilities, poverty and social and economic circumstances.
- (4) To promote such other charitable purposes as may from time to time be determined.

All the charity's assets are used for charitable purposes in support of these objects. Board/Management Committee members do not receive any monetary benefit for their role in governing the charity. In the event of any winding up of the charity its remaining assets shall be transferred to another charitable body with similar objects via cy pres. We strive to offer all services free at the point of contact.

Future Development

We will continue to grow and support current and new initiatives including local, national and international symposia, progress local strategy development around community arts practice, advocate for better processes for cultural producers and develop new training and support programmes for artists and communities and with developing our regional workshop and project offering.

Disclosure of Information to Auditors

The Trustees who held office at the date of approval of this trustees' report confirm that, so far as they are each aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Charitable Company's auditors are unaware; and each Trustee has taken all the steps they ought to have taken as a trustee to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Charitable Company's auditors are aware of that information.

Statement of Trustee's Responsibilities

Company and charity law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial period which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of its financial position at the end of that period

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed subject to any
- 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 charity will continue in operation.
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The trustees have overall responsibility for ensuring that the charity has an appropriate system of internal controls, financial and otherwise. They are also responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Auditor

PKF-FPM Accountants, have expressed their willingness to continue in office as auditors and examiners, and in accordance with Article 382 of the Companies Act 2006, a resolution proposing auditors as approved at General Meeting, Friday, 16th, December 2022.

Approval

This report was approved by the Directors and signed on their behalf.