

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

Period start date 01/04/2017

Period end date 31/03/18

Charity name: D'Sign

Charity registration number: 105202

Objectives and Activities

<p>Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document</p>	<p>D'Sign Arts was formed in 2016 and is a charity aimed for Deaf people, the hard of hearing, CODAs (Children of Deaf Adults) and hearing people with an interest in the arts to come together to create devised theatre and attend Workshops on a range of topics from Art and Drama to Yoga and Wellbeing. We aim to achieve equality of access of all arts and culture to Sign Language users and promote equality for Deaf performers as well as Deaf audiences. We also aim to accomplish the mixing of Deaf and Hearing artists improving integration between the two communities and promoting Deaf Awareness. All of this in turn aims to empower Deaf people, the hard of hearing, CODA (Child of Deaf Adults) and hearing people with an interest in the arts & Deaf community for the purpose of personal growth and helping them realise their abilities and potential.</p>
<p>Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts.</p>	<p>D'sign Arts Quiz night Friday 19th May 2017 at Errigle Inn. About 50 people took part with lots of excellent prizes for raffle from local companies sponsors and donate in NI. We raised around 400 pounds for D'sign Arts for workshops events.</p> <p>10 of D'sign arts went to Festival Clin d'Oeil, France 6th July 2017 to Sunday 9th July 2017. To see other Deaf arts groups and the possibilities for our own charity.</p> <p>D'Sign arts Witches project with Megan, Paula and Becky in BE Unique Drama group Coleraine and Sound friends family Part, Portadown, BSL witches storytelling tour in Belfast city centre. This was all Voluntary Work. It was extremely well received. This Project lead us to believe that it is very important for D'sign arts to continue development for children and young people.</p> <p>D'Sign goes to Morocco. On Saturday 10th February 2018, Kevin Blair, Becky Cooney and Paula Clarke from D'Signs Arts Group where involved in delivering performance arts workshops to deaf children at a deaf school in Ouarzazate for a week. The projects aim was to understand the ability to teach the kids how to express emotions, confidence-building and learn from positive deaf role models.</p>

Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit	We have complied with our duty to have due regard to the Commission's public benefit guidance when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.
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Achievements and Performance

<p>Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole.</p>	<p>Quiz Night</p> <p>D'Sign first ever pub quiz was in the Errigle Inn. The fundraising team did a great job promoting the event on facebook and around 50 people attended. The quiz was in Sign language and spoken english so all participants could understand. Everyone enjoyed themselves, it was a very close scores wise. The raffle prizes were donated from local companies and D'Sign Members. The funding team had come up with a very clever way to select who won the prizes through popping balloons. We raise £489.70 for our future workshops. The pub quiz was such a successful event we would definitely do this type of event again.</p> <p>Clin d'Oeil Festival</p> <p>D'sign Arts was created in 2015 after Malachy had been to Clin d'Oeil Festival and realised the severity of the lack of accessibility to the arts for Deaf audiences and theatre makers. This experience was so integral in the creation of D'Sign Arts that the Board decided to take a selection of members to the Festival to see what is possible to achieve in the arts sector. Clin d'Oeil Festival is a festival in France where Deaf artist come from all over the World to perform. We were at the festival from 2nd -5th July 2017 as where 6,000 other people. 5 members of D'Sign Arts went to Clin d'Oeil Festival in Reims, France to experience what Malachy felt his first time there which inspired him to create D'Sign Arts. Clin d'Oeil Festival is a role model for D'Sign Arts as they attract Deaf performers from all over the world and the festival is completely Deaf accessible. In Northern Ireland there are next to no deaf accessible performances in our theatres and the ones that are labeled as Deaf accessible either have subtitles or a translator at the side of stage both of which split your focus and you miss vital parts of the performance. We aim to provide training to Deaf and Hearing performers to create theatre that is accessible to all. We would love in the future to invite performers and theatre makers who have performed at Clin d'Oeil Festival to come and run workshops through D'Sign Arts to help us create more accessible theatre in Northern Ireland. Drama was not the only creative outlet showcased at Clin d'Oeil Festival, there was also professional Deaf people making and selling their own crafts at stalls around the festival, this has inspired us to not only support accessible drama workshops but arts and crafts also. We aim to have crafts workshops for our</p>
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members in the next year. Clin d'Oeil Festival also showcased Deaf Cinema, short films made by Deaf directors from different countries that show Deaf actors performing in them. This is another area of entertainment that is lacking Deaf accessibility in Northern Ireland. In the future we would like to provide media training for Deaf filmmakers perhaps training in edit film, Direction and Lighting.

We also attend a Big music disco event, the performance consisted of a Deaf DJ and Deaf Dancers from Australia and Japan. Over 6,000 people attended This was beneficial to us as we met people and used international sign language to communicate with people who were professional actors , directors, artists and media film makers this was a great networking opportunity for us and it was also very inspiring for our group who all have their own creative ambitions.

D'Sign Witches

The D'Sign Witches where are main outreach project in this time period. This project was aimed at young people, Hearing, Deaf, Siblings of Deaf Children and Children interested in Sign Language. We first took them to Be Unique Drama school in Coleraine with the aim to get the children interested in Sign Language and also given them some Deaf awareness skills, we were extremely well received by both the 12 children in the class and their parents. Here is a quote from the Teacher of Be Unique Drama on how she felt the Witches benefited the children

"Words cannot begin to describe how amazingly beautiful and fantastic the Witches performance was... all of the children were thoroughly engaged from start to finish and really enjoyed the Halloween games after too! However, the BEST part most definitely was how the children got to observe and learn for themselves tons of sign language... it was such a fantastic opportunity for our kiddies to get involved in learning and carrying out sign language, helping the witches make their spells in time for Halloween!"

Our second performance was for a charity called Sound Friends set up by Hearing Parents of Deaf Children. This can be a very intimidating circumstance when possible the first ever Deaf person you have met is your own child. The D'Sign Witches came crashing into their Halloween party with games and a Macbeth based performance there were 15 children present with a beautiful range of sign language users, hearing and Deaf children and a wide range in age from babies to 9 year olds. so the challenge for us was to make sure there where multiple participation levels where every child could excel and make sure that we were communication in all languages so we were understood by all. We exceeded our own expectations and the parents were very happy and the children had a blast. Here is a quote from one of the mothers

"What's special about me is my deafness and my language, I love sign language!" Well now we all love d'sign witches and my favourite quote of the day above is an example of why, engaging and entertaining as well as bringing deaf awareness all of sound friends loved meeting d'sign witches today and can't wait to meet again in the future"

We then on Halloween day went into Belfast City Center to perform the Witches spell from Macbeth in Sign Language and spoken english we had lots of people coming up to us and asking how they could get involved in learning Sign Language we also had Deaf children and Adult coming over delighted to see buskers using their Language which we would love to do more of and bring better Sign Language awareness to the streets.

Morocco

We knew before we arrived in Morocco that there would be quite a big age range (4-18) so it was important to adapt performances to each individual level. Such as the little group (4-9) depending on the child's ability. Older group (10-18). And then we had a final group that consisted of 6 children all girls that wanted something different so we scripted another piece for them The women's script was to tackle stigma of being a woman and Deaf within Muslim culture. We wanted to show families and friends creative pieces that reflected real life experiences for the children. We worked with the children to adapt scripts and characters and took all of their ideas and incorporated them into the performance. We also worked on expression through physicality (this was with all groups). We used animals as a guide to help the children understand their own emotions. We created depth with this exercise with the older children. Another aim was to encourage the children to step outside of their comfort zone and to see hearing and Deaf people working together in harmony as well as having a female director instead of a male. The children (4-9) were just given a script that was based on animals. This was just to encourage the children to experiment with theatre and to learn. We found the younger group were a lot more restrictive than the older children. The older group expressed their interest in performing a piece about deafness. So for us it was about assessing and adapting to what the children needed and wanted and making sure we hit the objectives of confidence building, creative thinking, expression, understanding emotions, characterisation , demonstrating the importance of mental health in a child friendly way, understanding deafness and creative outlet for stress.

Financial Review

Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the period	The Charity is in profit of £982.90 at the end of the financial period 01.04.2017 - 31.03.2018
Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held	As we do not have any monthly expenses due to the fact that we do not have a premises etc. and we only incur expenses when workshops or performances are organised we currently do not hold any reserves and therefore only raise money as and when needed. This is something we plan to change in the coming year however at the moment we have been unable to as we are such a small charity.
Amount of reserves held	0.00
Reasons for holding zero reserves	We do not have any monthly expenses due to the fact that we do not have a premises etc. and we only incur expenses when workshops or performances are organised we currently do not hold any reserves and therefore only raise money as and when needed.
Details of fund materially in deficit	N/A
Explanation of any uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern	We are currently struggling to get any funding due to communication difficulties, our board is made up of only Deaf people and therefore being able to fill out forms written in English which is our second language is difficult and we are unable to phone for guidance. We aim to rectify this in the coming year by putting some hearing people on our board to help with these problems.

Structure, Governance and Management

Description of charity's trusts:	
Type of governing document (trust deed, royal charter)	Constitution
How is the charity constituted? (e.g unincorporated association, CIO)	Unincorporated charitable association
Trustee selection methods including details of any constitutional provisions e.g. election to post or name of any person or body entitled to appoint one or more trustees	Trustees are elected at the AGM by a vote which is seconded.

Reference and Administrative details

Charity Name: D'Sign

Other names the Charity uses: D'Sign Arts

Charity Number: 105202

Charity's principal Address: 33 Manor Drive, Lisburn, County Antrim, BT28 1JH

Name of Charity Trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted
1	Megan Keenan	Chairperson	30/11/18 - Present
2	Hazel Wilson	Secretary	30/11/18 - Present
3	Malachy McBurney	Treasurer	01/09/2017 - Present
4	Robert Skelly	Vice Chairperson	30/11/18 - Present
5	Paula Clarke	Trustee	30/11/18 - Present
6	Paul Keenan	Trustee	30/11/18 - Present
7	Bernie Cooney	Trustee	30/11/18 - Present

Name of Charity Trustees who managed the charity in the year in question

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted
1	Malachy McBurney	Chairperson	01/04/2016-01/09/2017
2	Paula Clarke	Secretary	01/04/2017-30/11/2018
3	Marie Franklin	Treasurer	01/04/2016-01/09/2017
4	Robert Skelly	Chairperson	01/09/2017- 30/11/2018
5	Malachy McBurney	Treasurer	01/09/2017-Present
6	Paul Stewart	Trustee	01/04/2016 - 01/09/2017
7	Kevin Blair	Trustee	01/04/2016 - 30/11/2018

Declarations

The board declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's Board

Trustee name	Office (if any)	Signature
Megan Keenan	Chairperson	Megan Keenan
Hazel Wilson	Secretary	H. Wilson
Malachy McBurney	Treasurer	Malachy McBurney
Robert Skelly	Vice Chairperson	R Skelly