

TRUSTEES' REPORT

The trustees, who also act as directors of the company, present their annual report together with the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial period which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company and of the profit or loss of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements the directors are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP (FRS102)

The trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with UK GAAP and confirm that under company law they must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of the company's affairs and of the surplus or deficit for that period. The reporting framework that has been applied is the Charities SORP (FRS 102).

The directors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and to enable them to ensure the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

TRUSTEES

The trustees of the charity during the financial year were as stated on page 2.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Aims and objectives

Throughout 2023-2024 R-Space Gallery continued to successfully pursue its charitable objects as defined in its governing document:

(1) To advance the arts, including contemporary visual arts and crafts, for the benefit of the public in the Lisburn and Castlereagh area and its environs in Northern Ireland (hereinafter called the "area of benefit") and in particular:

(a) to advance the education of the public in the arts including contemporary arts and crafts, and to encourage appreciation for and participation in all forms of the arts by any charitable means the directors see fit;

(b) to co-ordinate the provision of advice, support, training and mentoring and provision of facilities for the purpose of the encouragement and stimulation of those falling within the creative sector and community arts sector, by any charitable means the directors see fit.

(2) To promote community development and encourage community spirit and civic pride by organising or facilitating provision of activities and or space to support delivery of arts, cultural, tourism, recreational, well-being, and other initiatives that support community integration and stimulation of artistic creativity in the area of benefit.

Significant Activities

Exhibition Programme

Our exhibition programme was instrumental to the pursuit of our aims and objectives, delivered thanks to continued major annual funding from the National Lottery through the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

R-Space run a series of high-quality and inspiring exhibitions, encompassing visual arts, craft and design, and accompanied by artist talks and participatory workshops, that benefited artists, individuals and communities in Lisburn, Northern Ireland and beyond. Throughout the programme we collaborated with and supported several local and international artists at different stages of their career. We offered them opportunities to showcase their art and develop their practice, and encouraged them to network, share experience and skills with other artists.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

(continued)

The programme's exhibitions, talks and workshops took place in our welcoming gallery space in the heart of Lisburn and were offered free of charge to the public to promote access and participation. Digital art content for all exhibitions on our website and social media also allowed us to reach viewers nationally and internationally. These activities successfully engaged numerous participants and audiences who made positive comments about them. We therefore believe that the programme promoted their understanding and appreciation of the arts. It also brought other significant benefits. It enhanced the provision of inclusive arts initiatives in the area, attracted citizens and visitors, brought together communities in a shared space, thus contributing to community development and integration, and promoting Lisburn as a tourist destination.

Here is a concise overview of our exhibition programme at R-Space -

'McCaw Allan: A Tea Towel Collection' (April-May 2023) with artist Robert Peters and Fiona McKelvie. Exhibition celebrating both McCaw Allan, historically a leading NI company producing linen items, and the linen heritage in Northern Ireland.

'Connected Emotions' (July - August 2023) with artist Jill Phillips - A research and exhibition project using interactive textile installations to explore and display connections between different designs and emotions. 'The Alchemy of Print' (October - November 2023) with artist and academic Trish Belford - A research and exhibition project presenting textile designs and exposing the value of technical craft, dyeing and printing expertise.

'Materials Messages and Meaning #12' (November - December 2023) - Now in its twelfth year, 'MMM#12' explored the work of local artists selected from R-Space public open call. They responded to the theme 'Transition' or the process in which something changes from one state to another.

'Connection: Disconnection' (January - February 2024) with multi-disciplinary artist Heather Dornan Wilson. Exhibition showcasing artworks in different media seeking to explore shared human experiences.

'Threads of Illusion' (February - March 2024) featuring Dr Shelley James, glass artist and international expert on light and well-being. Presenting her op art glass sculptures and layered works that play with our understanding of space and time.

The programme included R-Space annual residency and exhibition project 'Re:New Wallace #6' (June 2023) marked the sixth collaboration between a Northern Irish artist selected by R-Space and the prestigious Wallace Collection Museum in Hertford House, London. Its contents were inherited and augmented by Sir Richard Wallace, who in the 19th Century inherited the Hertford Estate comprising lands that stretched from the River Lagan all the way to the shores of Lough Neagh in Northern Ireland. This year the project provided a residency opportunity to visual artist Emma Whitehead. The artist researched artefacts in the collection connected to the compulsion to measure time, distance, the seasons, and created artworks as a response to this particular theme, later exhibited at R-Space.

Linen Biennale

While the glory days of "Linenopolis" may be behind us, the echoes of this vibrant industry remain woven into the fabric of the region. R-Space renewed its commitment to the linen legacy and tradition, securing major funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (thanks to the National Lottery Players) for the Linen Biennale 2023, a very successful three-month festival of arts, crafts and design.

Many elements ensured its success. What set the Linen Biennale apart was a forward-thinking vision that celebrated the past while exploring new opportunities for the future use of linen and flax. The initiatives reflected a commitment to revive and renew our collective understanding of the linen's legacy. Through collaborative partnerships, exhibitions, discussions, talks, tours, and other events, the festival sought to stimulate new thinking about one of Ireland's oldest textiles.

The Linen Biennale 2023 took place during August, September and October, with some activities happening outside the three-month period. The festival worked with over 50 delivery partners which supported the hosting and programming of events. This encompassed over 100 events spread across Northern Ireland reaching 7 out of 9 Local Council Areas (Belfast City Council, Lisburn & Castlereagh, Ards & North Down, Newry Mourne & Down, Causeway Coast and Glens, Mid-Ulster and Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon). They included:

TRUSTEES' REPORT (continued)

- 17 exhibitions
- 38 talks, tours, and demos
- 33 workshops
- 23 'other' events (such as a drama, a fashion market and outreach events)

A high number of creative and other professionals worked on this programme, and an extraordinary number of people enjoyed it as shown by these figures:

- 100 professionals, including artists, designers, makers, and professionals working in the arts, industry and heritage sectors
- 600 participants
- 10,000 audiences (in person and online)

Among the Linen Biennale highlights, were:

'Plant Communitas' Exhibition (R-Space Gallery, September 2023) an international collaboration curated by Patrica Brien. Artists working in a variety of art forms looked at the flax plant cycle and its connections with cultural traditions and practices. Featuring Annemiek de Beer, Patricia Brien, Amanda Coppes-Martin, Bridget Kennedy, Geoff Diego Litherland, Angharad McLaren, Tim Parry-Williams and Ilka White.

'FlaxPaperLabs' Residency (R-Space Gallery & Flax Artist Studios, Belfast, July-August 2023) - Canada-based paper and fibre artist Regine Neumann undertook a residency in Flax Artist Studios for her research project about traditional paper making techniques using flax. As part of the collaborative ethos the artist delivered papermaking workshops to artists groups building numerous connections.

'Palimpsest' Exhibition (The Drying Room at Conway Mill, Belfast, September 2023) - Presenting artists based at Conway Mill studios and their works in a variety of media exploring different aspects of linen - from the introduction of flax by the Celts, to the industry's pivotal role in the changes in society, and the echoes that remain today. Featuring artists Karen Daye-Hutchinson, Anna Donovan Ceramic, Marie-Louise Gormley, Melanie Woolley and Ruth Hamilton-Sturdy.

Lunchtime Lecture Series (Summer - Autumn 2023) - A collaboration with the Ulster Museum and the Linen Hall Library, Belfast. Across the programme we ran a series of engaging public talks themed around industry, material, environment and narrative. Many talks were recorded and are now available online as a legacy of the festival.

Outreach projects

As part of R-Space's commitment to improving wellbeing and contributing to community development through engagement in the arts, the Linen Biennale 2023 was accompanied by an outreach programme. Artist Robert Peters worked with nine different community groups across Northern Ireland. Together they explored traditional print techniques on linen, and participants created their own printed designs onto linen inspired by themes of their choice.

Following the success of this programme, additional funding was secured from the Community Relations Council for 'Patterns of Collaboration', a new outreach project. This saw groups of different backgrounds and abilities coming together and working on collaborative textile art pieces to celebrate cultural diversity.

RELATED PARTIES

There are no related parties to report save the board of trustees, and no transactions to report.

RESULTS

The deficit for the year was £64,934 (2023: £ 61,526 surplus)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (continued)

CHARITABLE STATUS

The charity is an incorporated private limited company. It is registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under reference number 106350.

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The public benefits that flow from the purpose (1)

- Awareness and knowledge amongst the public of all aspects of arts.
- Sense of well-being from opportunities to experience and participate in the arts.
- Heightened creative capacity and professional development among new and emerging artists.
- Development of technical processes and sharing of skills and collaboration.

The public benefits that flow from the purpose (2)

- Increased opportunities to access the arts.
- Engagement and participation in artistic activities and events, particularly amongst marginalised groups in society.
- Arts as a means of expression and fulfilment.
- Arts helping development of a shared and vibrant society.
- Increased effectiveness of community and voluntary organisations that access the facilities and support on offer.

These benefits are evidenced by the feedback and surveys we gather from visitors, artists, participants and public and our continued support from The Arts Council NI, National Lottery Fund, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and other funding partners and supporters.

The trustees agree here is no foreseen harm flowing from this purpose. The beneficiaries of this purpose are the general public, visitors, and artists. The trustees agree that there is no foreseen private benefit flowing from this purpose.

FINANCIAL REVIEW & RESERVES POLICY

Reserves at 31 March 2024 were £20,913 . The trustees have a policy to ensure that £15,000 of these is ringfenced so that reserves do not fall below this level. The company's core expenditure is well controlled due to the nature of the operations. It continues to expand its charitable and fund raising activities to ensure it reaches as many people as possible. The profile of expenditure is as agreed with the funders when applicable.

Unrestricted funds are funds which are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes. Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements if identified as such. Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund.

IMPACT OF COVID-19

The impact of coronavirus restrictions meant that there had been a reduction in physical in-person gatherings for performances and workshops and an increase in online activity. Now back to normal there has been no impact on the charity's sustainability due to the active management of the charity. The trustees are satisfied that the charity can continue to endeavour to achieve its objectives.

TRUSTEES' REPORT (continued)

GOING CONCERN

The trustees, having considered the charity's income streams, financial means and strategy for dealing with issues such as the impact of Covid-19, over the next 12-18 months, are satisfied that the going concern basis is appropriate.

FUTURE PLANS

R-Space will remain committed to secure funding for our programme and thus to offer inspiring exhibitions, engaging participatory arts initiatives and outreach projects for the benefit of the public.

As the organisation strives to enhance its capacity to benefit individuals and communities, it is our ambition to develop a creative hub. To this end R-Space Gallery will seek capital funding to purchase and restore the 'Listed Building' that the charity occupies in Castle Street Lisburn and transform it into 'The Linen Rooms Lisburn – Creative Community Hub'. This would provide a valuable creative space to further drive cultural, social and economic regeneration within the heart of the city and contribute to revival of the historic character of the Lisburn Historic Quarter.

MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

R-Space continued to be managed by a strong and enthusiastic operational team of managers with a wealth of expertise and experience in management, programming, development, marketing and administration. The Board of Trustees supported and guided the team thanks to their wide range of expertise and a strong breadth of experience, both from within the cultural and private/business sectors.

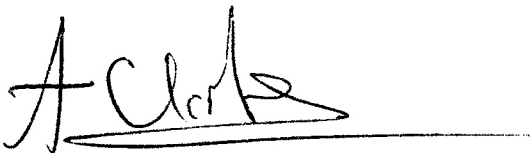
AUDIT EXEMPTION

In accordance with the provisions of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 the charity is exempt from the statutory audit requirement.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

The independent examiner, Donald R Minshull FCA of Minshull & Company, Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor, offers himself for re-appointment.

The Board of R-Space Gallery would wish to thank the staff team and volunteers for their ongoing energy drive and commitment and thank all our funding partners and those across our communities of interest who continue to help R-Space Gallery advance the arts, including contemporary visual arts and crafts, for the benefit of the public in the Lisburn and Castlereagh area and its environs in Northern Ireland.



A Clarke
Chairman of the Board of Trustees
BY ORDER OF THE BOARD
Date 27 November 2024