



# **DANCE ASSOCIATE LTD**

(A private company Limited by Guarantee and not having Share Capital,  
and a registered charity)

Registered in Northern Ireland  
Charity Registration Number: NIC106918  
Company Registration Number: NI612228

## **Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 05 April 2024**

### **Period of Accounts**

Start date: 06 April 2023

End date: 05 April 2024

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## Introduction

I am delighted to report on another dynamic and successful year for Dance Associate Ltd. The year 2023-2024 has been marked by creativity, resilience, and growth as we continued our mission to enrich the lives of young people, families, and communities through the art of dance.

After navigating a challenging funding landscape, Dance Associate has once again demonstrated its ability to adapt and thrive. While we faced some limitations, particularly in the growth of our participant numbers, our commitment to providing high-quality, accessible dance programmes remains unwavering. Thanks to the continued support of the Education Authority NI, we've been able to engage hundreds of young people across Northern Ireland, providing them with invaluable opportunities for personal growth, artistic development, and creative expression.

This year, we are proud to report on a wide range of activities that have not only fostered the next generation of dance talent but have also contributed to the cultural fabric of our community. From performances in Newry Town Hall to youth workshops in rural areas, we have worked tirelessly to ensure that the transformative power of dance is available to all. Additionally, we laid the groundwork for exciting new initiatives that will shape our future, including the launch of the Dance Industry Awards, the creation of a new island-wide dance festival, and the development of Project FUSION: Fostering Cultural Unity Through Dance. This innovative project aims to celebrate cultural diversity through the medium of dance, reinforcing our mission to use the arts as a bridge to connect communities and inspire collaboration.

As we continue to address the challenges posed by reduced funding and rising operational costs, we remain focused on our long-term vision for sustainability, creativity, and impact. This report highlights our achievements, reflects on the obstacles we've faced, and looks forward to the next exciting chapter of our journey.

I would like to extend my deepest thanks to our Board of Trustees, our dedicated staff and volunteers, and all of our supporters for their continued commitment to Dance Associate Ltd. It is with their unwavering support that we are able to continue making

a lasting impact in the lives of the young people we serve. Together, we are shaping the future of dance and nurturing the next generation of artists and leaders.

Peter Shannon

Chair



## **Executive Summary**

The year 2023-2024 has been a period of resilience and strategic planning for Dance Associate. Despite challenges posed by reduced funding and limited resources, our organisation has continued to thrive as a vital hub for dance, youth engagement, and community enrichment in Northern Ireland and beyond. This year's achievements reflect our commitment to inspiring communities, fostering inclusivity, and advancing the artform of dance.

Key highlights include:

- **Sustained Programmes:** Our flagship initiatives, including the "Step by Step Club," "Dance Impact," and "Open Space," delivered meaningful opportunities for participants of all ages. These programmes engaged over 850 individuals through performances, workshops, and community-focused events, continuing to enrich lives across diverse audiences.
- **Youth Work Initiatives:** Supported by the Education Authority Youth Service through annual generic funding, we continued to deliver accessible, high-quality programmes tailored to empower young people, particularly those from rural or underserved communities. Our youth-focused activities encompassed a broad range of opportunities, including dynamic dance training sessions and personal development initiatives, fostering both artistic growth and leadership skills.
- **Community Outreach:** Dance Associate Ltd strengthened its role as a cornerstone of community engagement, offering inclusive classes designed to promote physical well-being, creative expression, and social connection. Our community programmes welcomed individuals of all abilities and backgrounds, ensuring dance remained a unifying and transformative experience.

Despite a challenging funding environment and rising operational costs, we successfully maintained the quality and impact of our work. However, these constraints did limit our ability to grow participant numbers as significantly as we had envisioned. To address these challenges, we have laid the groundwork for new revenue-generating initiatives, including the launch of a Dance Industry Awards programme and an island-wide dance festival, both set to debut in the coming year.

Our financial performance underscores the importance of adaptive measures and diversified funding streams. The Board and management team are committed to ensuring sustainability while continuing to deliver innovative and impactful programmes.

Looking to the future, Dance Associate remains dedicated to its mission of enriching lives through dance. With the steadfast support of our funders, partners, and the tireless efforts of our staff and volunteers, we are poised to embrace new opportunities with optimism and determination. Together, we are building a legacy of creativity, inclusion, and excellence for the communities we serve.

## Legal and Administrative Information

Directors and Trustees:	Peter Shannon (Chair) Dominic Moore Malcolm Dibb Victoria Campbell
Secretary:	Vladimir Samsonik
Registered Address:	52 Mill Street Newry County Down GB-NIR BT34 1AG
Company Registration Number:	NI612228
Charity Registration Number:	NIC106918
Accountant:	Stuart Davis Consulting Ltd 23 Carnforth Road Heaton Chapel Stockport SK4 5LL
Independent Examiner:	Paul Voltzenlogel 9 Queens Court Haywards Heath RH16 1RJ
Bankers:	HSBC UK 25-29 Royal Avenue Belfast BT1 1FB
Key Management Personnel:	Nina Dibb – Executive & Artistic Director Victoria Campbell - Youth Coordinator

## **Directors' Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2023**

The Trustees (who are also Directors for company law purposes) have pleasure in submitting their Annual Report and financial statements of the company for the year ending 5<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the Charity's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and "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)" (as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2016)

### **Charitable Purposes**

Dance Associate Ltd is a voluntary organisation based in Northern Ireland, dedicated to addressing social welfare through performing and creative arts. By providing opportunities for recreation and leisure activities, the organisation aims to enhance the quality of life and well-being of people across Northern Ireland.

Dance Associate Ltd operates as a company limited by guarantee and is a registered charity in Northern Ireland. Additionally, it is a registered non-profit company in the Republic of Ireland, with an application currently submitted to the Irish Charity Regulator to attain charitable status.

The objective is to provide equality of opportunity to those who have otherwise been marginalised from mainstream arts provision. Dance Associate Limited seeks to enhance public knowledge of the cultural and educational value of arts in all their aspects through the management of events for public performance and the showcasing of performing and creative arts.

Dance Associate Limited promotes, maintains, and improves performing and creative arts education, particularly through the production of workshops, performances, and the encouragement of various arts forms, including contemporary dance, drama, mime, singing, and music. This includes the development, preparation, and establishment of projects to:

- Foster, present, organize, manage, and produce accessible high-quality work of cultural and educational value to the public, enhancing knowledge, understanding, and practice of arts in all their aspects.
- Advance and raise the profile of underdeveloped art forms through the promotion of artistic collaborations and fostering partnerships with similar organisations.
- Encourage and stimulate the artistic creativity and awareness of people in the benefit area by providing training, educational resources, and support/opportunities for artistic expression.
- Promote and develop educational and recreational opportunities and resources for the benefit of children, young people, and adults in the area, ensuring equality of opportunity for those otherwise marginalized from mainstream arts provision.
- Provide appropriate quality programmes to ensure the involvement of all ages, including children, young people, and adults.
- Identify and create opportunities for the exchange of skills, resources, and information, undertaking any other activities and projects deemed appropriate.

Dance Associate Ltd is not limited in the art form used by and for people for artistic expression. The organisation aims to encourage appreciation for and participation in the arts by providing educational performing and creative arts projects, information, and training, as well as classes, workshops, arts facilities and equipment, support and instruction, and the organisation of showcases of works and events.

### **The company's Objects**

To support and develop a vibrant performing and creative arts ecology in Northern Ireland which will encourage people of Northern Ireland of all ages to participate in and appreciate performing arts and introduce people to culture with the objective of improving their conditions of life and well-being and in particular: -

(a) to promote, maintain and improve performing arts education particularly through the production of workshops, performances and the encouragement of the arts including contemporary dance, drama, mime, singing and music

(b) to foster, promote and advance preparation and establishment of projects and events in partnership with similar artistic organisations

(c) to promote education and training in performing and creative arts and related subjects particularly for children, young people, elderly people, and others who, for whatever reason, may be considered excluded from society

(d) to advance performing and creative arts through the provision of training, career advice, coaching and continuing professional development for performing and creative arts practitioners and organisations upon terms appropriate to their means and in such other ways as the directors shall in their absolute discretion determine

(e) to encourage appreciation for and participation in the performing and creative arts in all its aspects through the provision of affordable facilities, resources, training and such other services appropriate for the creation, production, performance and appreciation of the performing and creative art forms; and

(f) to advance and raise the profile of performing and creative art forms through the promotion of artistic collaborations and fostering of partnerships with similar artistic organisations involving activities such as workshops and trips to theatrical performances.

## **Public Benefit Statement**

Charity trustees are obligated to formulate strategic plans to guarantee the provision of public benefit and the accomplishment of objectives outlined in our governing document. These objectives align with the purposes stipulated by the Charities Act 2011. When assessing our aims and objectives and planning future activities, we have consulted the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's general guidance on public benefit. Specifically, the trustees evaluate how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives they have established.

## **Achievements in the Year**

***A Symphony of Creative Expression*** - Dance Associate Ltd has once again demonstrated its commitment to creativity, community, and innovation, overcoming challenges and continuing to deliver impactful programmes that inspire and engage

participants. The year 2023-2024 was a journey of artistic discovery for our younger participants, as we navigated the intersection of performing arts, education, and community outreach to create a meaningful and lasting impact through dance.

Through our flagship programmes and new initiatives, Dance Associate has emerged as a cultural force within Newry and beyond. Our work has transformed lives through dance, from nurturing emerging artists to reaching young people in rural and underserved communities.

### ***Production, Performance & Touring***

This year, Dance Associate shifted its focus to offering creative opportunities to our amateur participants and students, ensuring that the transformative power of dance was accessible to everyone, regardless of age or experience level. While we did not produce professional company productions this year, our performances continued to celebrate creativity, collaboration, and community.

**Open Space – Youth Programme:** The Open Space programme flourished as a dynamic platform for new works across a range of art forms. Participants showcased their talents in dance, music, photography, and fine art, embracing a multidisciplinary approach to creative expression.

**Community Showcases:** Our mature participants and students stepped into the spotlight, presenting works that reflected their personal journeys and creative growth. These performances demonstrated the depth of talent within our programmes and the supportive environment we cultivate.

**Engaging Local Audiences:** With strong support from our audiences, we brought these works to life in local venues, reaching audiences who might not otherwise have access to the arts. By celebrating the achievements of our participants, we enriched the cultural fabric of the communities we serve.

Although large-scale touring and professional productions were not the focus this year, the shift towards empowering participants to share their work has reinforced Dance Associate's role as a vital community arts organisation. This year's approach ensured

that the joy of performance was shared broadly, creating moments of connection and inspiration across Newry, Banbridge and the Republic of Ireland.

### ***Participation & Outreach***

Dance Associate remains committed to accessibility and inclusion, ensuring that participants of all ages and abilities can engage with the transformative power of the arts.

Seasonal Schemes: Our much-loved Summer Scheme and Easter Camp have become key highlights of the year, offering young children vibrant and imaginative experiences. These schemes, supported by Newry and Mourne Council and the Southern Health & Social Care Trust, combine the joy of creative exploration with meaningful connections, leaving lasting memories for participants and their families.

Classes and Workshops: This year, over 520 hours of classes and workshops brought together participants aged 3 to 75, introducing them to a variety of styles including contemporary dance, ballet, country social dancing, yoga, and Pilates. Each session became a unique opportunity for individuals to express themselves, develop skills, and build confidence within a supportive community.

Free Studio Use: We proudly supported over 40 hours of free studio space for young creative artists, enabling them to explore their ideas, refine their work, and take the first steps toward sharing their voices with the wider world. This initiative continues to shape a vibrant creative ecosystem, championing the talent of tomorrow.

Participation and outreach lie at the heart of Dance Associate ethos. By fostering creativity at every level, we aim to inspire artistic growth, cultivate a sense of belonging, and celebrate the achievements of everyone we engage with. These initiatives go beyond creativity, promoting significant physical and mental well-being. Through self-expression and active participation, we empower individuals to build resilience, embrace healthier lifestyles, and find joy in connection and movement.

## ***Artistic Development***

Dance Associate remained steadfast in its commitment to nurturing artistic talent, offering platforms for both emerging and established artists to flourish:

**Step by Step Club:** This innovative programme encouraged participants to discover and refine their choreographic voices. Under the guidance of experienced artists, including Nina Dibb, Nicole Clinton, and Chris Crook, participants engaged in movement research and training that not only advanced their artistic abilities but also fostered a deeper understanding of the creative process.

**Graduate Opportunities:** By partnering with local schools, colleges, and youth organisations, we provided valuable work placements that offered students hands-on experience in the arts sector, supporting career development and strengthening the future of Northern Ireland's creative workforce.

**Support for Local Artists:** Our commitment to the local arts community included over 40 hours of free studio use and in-kind resources, providing artists with space and opportunities to explore, develop, and share their work. These efforts cultivated meaningful relationships that will continue to enrich the creative landscape.

## ***Studio Programmes & Workshops***

Studio-based programmes have long been central to Dance Associate mission, offering a diverse range of classes, workshops, and events:

- **Diverse Offerings:** This year saw 78 new participants join our regular class programmes, which featured ballet, acrobatic arts, musical theatre, jazz, and more. These classes offered individuals of all skill levels a chance to express themselves and grow through movement.
- **Community Connection:** Over 16 free workshops and dance classes were offered, reaching children, young people, and adults. These sessions fostered inclusivity, well-being, and a sense of belonging.
- **Art Exhibitions:** Studio spaces doubled as creative galleries, showcasing window displays and exhibitions by participants and teachers. This

interdisciplinary approach reinforced the importance of exploring multiple art forms to inspire creative thinking.

### ***Nurturing Artistic Expression and Community Support***

The progress and impact of Dance Associate would not have been possible without the generous support of our funders, donors, and partners:

- **Community Contributions:** A portion of our income was generated through the online platform Easyfundraising, where supporters contributed to our mission by participating in small but impactful fundraising activities while shopping online. These contributions, while modest, played a meaningful role in sustaining our programmes and reaching wider audiences.
- **Educational Authority Support:** Additional funding through the Educational Authority Generic Funds provided crucial support for our youth work initiatives. This funding allowed us to expand our outreach and deliver high-quality programmes, ensuring that young people across Newry, Mourne and Down council district have access to enriching and transformative dance experiences.
- **Project Fusion: Fostering Cultural Unity Through Dance:** For the first time, we prepared a funding application to the Newry, Mourne, and Down Council for a project aimed at celebrating cultural diversity through dance. This initiative underscores our commitment to using dance as a medium to foster unity, collaboration, and cultural understanding within our community. The application is set to be submitted in the next available council funding opportunity.

### ***Highlights of the Year***

- **Engagement:** Over 780 participants joined our programmes, spanning ages 3 to 75, highlighting the inclusivity and broad reach of our initiatives.
- **Impact:** Delivered more than 470 hours of workshops and classes, with 78 new participants enriching our community this year.
- **Collaboration:** Partnered with over 30 local artists, facilitating innovative projects and fostering creative growth.

- **Achievements:** Advanced significant initiatives, including laying the groundwork for the Dance Industry Awards, an island-wide dance festival, and Project Fusion, expanding our impact within the arts sector.

## ***Gratitude***

Dance Associate would like to extend heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to the success of our programmes during 2023-2024. We are immensely grateful to the artists, staff, audiences, participants, volunteers, partner organisations, clients, suppliers, supporters, and funders who have been integral to our achievements.

Special appreciation goes to the Education Authority Youth Service, whose generous support has underpinned our youth initiatives. We also thank Newry and Mourne Council, the Southern Health & Social Care Trust, and those who contributed through platforms like Easyfundraising.

We would also like to acknowledge our anonymous benefactors, whose quiet generosity enables us to continue creating transformative experiences in dance and the arts. Together, your support empowers us to foster creativity, build community connections, and inspire the next generation of artists.

Your commitment fuels our passion and ensures that Dance Associate continues to thrive as a beacon of artistic expression and community well-being. Thank you for being an essential part of our journey.

## **Financial Review**

### ***Income and Expenditure***

Income for the year ending 5<sup>th</sup> April 2024 totalled £41,595 (2023: £54,803). Expenditure for the year totalled £46,376 (2023: £82,391), resulting in a deficit of £4,782 (2023: deficit of £27,588).

Dance Associate Ltd received no income grants during the period (2023: 1 grant totalling £4,472; This grant was entirely spent in the relevant period.).

During the year, Dance Associate Ltd did not invest any additional funds into fixed assets (2023: £2,095).

### ***Funds Position***

At the end of the period, Dance Associate Ltd.'s reserve balance totalled £5,410 (2023: £10,192). All funds are unrestricted. Of this, Fixed Asset values represented £14,394 (2022: £22,475) leaving a negative Free Reserve balance of £8,983 (2023: negative balance of £12,283).

### ***Reserves Policy***

Our reserves policy is to hold 3 months' worth of non-variable expenditure as reserves. This expenditure is the unavoidable amounts needed to run the organisation (e.g., rent, utilities, etc). At the end of the period, this amounted to £3,250. Current Free Reserves, at negative £8,983, are below this level. The trustees are pleased with the charity's progress in closing this gap during the period and they continue to focus on bring this back to target over the medium term.

### ***Going Concern***

Dance Associate has developed a comprehensive five-year Strategic Plan for 2024–2029, outlining a clear framework for growth, sustainability, and adaptation to the evolving challenges within the arts sector. The plan strategically aligns our artistic, educational, and operational goals while maintaining flexibility to adjust costs in line with income fluctuations.

## **Structure, Governance and Management**

### ***Legal Status and Organisation***

Dance Associate Ltd is a private company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 16 April 2012, and registered in Northern Ireland with the registration number NI612228. On 01 April 2019, the company became a charity registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (charity registration number: NIC106918). The company operates under its Articles of Association, adopted on 19 January 2019.

As members of Dance Associate, a representative from our management board is invited to sit on the Dance Associate board. We collaborate closely to promote good governance, adhere to best practices, and facilitate effective communication across the organization. This collaborative effort ensures the commitment and connected partnerships work cohesively to manage the strategic direction for Dance Associate efficiently and effectively.

### ***Board of Trustees***

During the reporting period, the following trustees held office:

- Peter Shannon
- Dominic Moore
- Malcolm Dibb
- Victoria Campbell

### ***Management Board***

The Management Board consists of four directors responsible for overseeing the Charity's operations. Delegated authority for daily operations rests with Nina Dibb, Executive and Artistic Director, Victoria Campbell as a Youth coordinator, and Vladimir Samsonik as a Marketing support. Together, they manage finances, programming, and the day-to-day running of the organisation.

New trustees undergo a structured induction programme, including guidance on legal obligations, the Charity's governance, and operational processes. This ensures that all trustees are equipped to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. During the 2023-2024 period, no new trustees were appointed.

### ***Related Parties and Co-operation with Other Organisations***

None of the Trustees received remuneration or other benefits from their work with the Charity, other than as noted below. Any connection between a director or senior member of the charity with a contracted supplier must be disclosed to the full Management Board in the same way as any other contractual relationship with a related party. In the current year, no such related party transactions were reported.

Victoria Campbell provided various freelance work for the company, for which Victoria received £6,113 in total during the year.

## **Risk Management: Addressing Challenges and Securing the Future**

The Board of Trustees has undertaken a comprehensive review of the major risks faced by Dance Associate. This diligent assessment encompasses operational, financial, and strategic challenges, with particular attention to funding uncertainties, shifts in the economic climate, and the changing landscape of the arts sector. These risks have been meticulously evaluated to ensure that robust systems and proactive measures are in place to mitigate potential impacts effectively.

To address these challenges, Dance Associate has developed a forward-looking Strategic Plan for 2024–2029. This plan builds on the achievements of the 2019–2024 cycle, during which critical strategic objectives were successfully realised. The new plan outlines a clear roadmap to safeguard the organisation's stability while fostering growth and innovation.

Central to this plan is Dance Associate's unwavering commitment to its artist-led ethos, which prioritises creativity as the driving force behind all programmes and initiatives. By aligning artistic vision with strategic planning, the company ensures that its mission of empowering communities through dance remains at the forefront of its operations.

Recognising the increasingly challenging economic landscape, Dance Associate has set ambitious goals to thrive despite adversity. These include:

**Strengthening Organisational Resilience:** Maintaining a highly skilled core team to deliver impactful programmes and ensuring financial stability through prudent management.

**Expanding Community Reach:** Increasing engagement through innovative programming and deepening relationships with local and regional partners.

**Enhancing Operational Foundations:** Establishing a sustainable foothold for the company and its studios to support long-term growth and creative excellence.

As part of its commitment to good governance, the Board continues to monitor risks regularly, adapting strategies to meet emerging challenges. Dance Associate is poised to navigate uncertainty with a clear focus on sustainability, creativity, and community impact, ensuring that it not only endures but flourishes in the years to come.

### **Staff: Cultivating Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion**

Dance Associate Ltd is deeply committed to fostering an inclusive workplace that upholds the principles of equality and diversity. As an equal opportunity's employer, the organisation ensures that its recruitment, employment practices, and overall workplace culture reflect these core values.

Our Equal Opportunities Policy serves as a cornerstone, guiding the organisation in creating a supportive environment that cherishes diversity in all its forms. This policy aligns with the latest equality legislation, ensuring Dance Associate meets its legal obligations while striving to go beyond compliance to actively promote inclusivity.

Dance Associate is particularly committed to identifying and removing barriers for underrepresented groups within the arts sector. While the company seeks to employ individuals with disabilities wherever practical, it acknowledges that, as of the current reporting period, there are no disabled members among its staff. The organisation remains proactive in reviewing its practices and fostering partnerships to increase accessibility and inclusivity.

By embracing diversity, Dance Associate aims to cultivate a workplace that reflects the communities it serves, enriching the creative process and ensuring a vibrant and dynamic organisational culture. As part of this commitment, the Board and leadership team will continue to prioritise inclusivity and equity, embedding these principles across all levels of the organisation.

With prudent financial management, robust reserves, and realistic budget forecasts, the Board is confident in the company's ability to continue its operations effectively. These measures ensure that Dance Associate Ltd remains a going concern, enabling us to fulfil our mission of fostering creativity, community, and artistic excellence. Accordingly, the financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis.

## **Fundraising Activities: Sourcing Support with Purpose**

Fundraising remains a vital component of Dance Associate operations, enabling the organisation to deliver services that align with its charitable objectives. The company takes a thoughtful and purpose-driven approach to fundraising, focusing on building meaningful connections with supporters through its artistic and community-oriented work.

Unlike organisations that engage external fundraising agencies, Dance Associate opts for a more personal strategy. By cultivating relationships with audiences, participants, and stakeholders, the organisation ensures that its fundraising efforts are authentic and reflective of its mission. This approach not only reinforces the organisation's values but also deepens the trust and engagement of its supporters.

Dance Associate's fundraising efforts include leveraging digital platforms such as Easyfundraising, which allows supporters to contribute while shopping online. Though modest, these contributions represent an essential element of the organisation's ability to sustain and expand its programmes.

Moving forward, the company remains committed to exploring innovative, ethical, and community-focused fundraising strategies. This ensures that every contribution directly supports Dance Associate's mission to foster creativity, inclusivity, and artistic excellence within the community.

## **Political Donations: A Neutral Stance**

Dance Associate upholds its commitment to impartiality and neutrality in all aspects of its operations. Throughout the reporting period, the organisation refrained from making any political donations. This policy ensures that Dance Associate remains steadfastly focused on its core mission of fostering creativity, community engagement, and artistic growth, free from any partisan affiliations or influence.

This neutral stance underscores Dance Associate's dedication to inclusivity and its responsibility to serve a diverse community without bias or political alignment.

## **Additional Information: Compliant and Approved**

This comprehensive report has been meticulously prepared in accordance with the special provisions outlined in part 15 of the Companies Act 2006. The Board of Directors, in a session held on the 18th of November 2024, gave their seal of approval to this report.

Signed on Behalf of The Board By:

Name: Peter Shannon

Status: Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Shannon', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.