

The Common Players Ltd



Annual Accounts

For the year ended 31st March 2022

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Company Number: 3294798

Registered Charity Number: 1061431

Trustees & Director's Report

For the year ended 31st March 2022

The Company's registered address is: 72 West End Road, Bradninch, Exeter EX5 4QS

Trustees: The members of the Trustee Board are listed below. Appointment of trustees is governed by the memorandum and articles of the charity.

Richard Feltham
Janet Hookway
Richard Jennings
Keith Palmer

Structure, Governance and Management

The Common Players is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 19 December 1996 and registered as a charity on 20 March 1997.

The governing document is the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The trustees for the purpose of charity law are also directors of the company. Under the Articles of Association one third of the trustees retire from office at each Annual General Meeting at which they are eligible for re-election.

Trustee induction and Training

All new trustees are invited to attend short training sessions to familiarise themselves with the charity and the context within which it works. This induction is held by the Chair of Trustees and covers:

- The obligations of Trustee Board members as contained in the document 'The Common Players – Trustee Board Responsibilities'
- The main documents which set out the operational framework for the charity, including the Memorandum and Articles.
- The current financial position as set out in the latest published accounts.
- Future plans and objectives

Objectives and activities

Purposes of the charity

To advance education for public benefit by the promotion of the arts, in particular but not exclusively, the art of drama.

Company overview

The Common Players was formed in 1989, setting out then to create accessible theatre and tour it outside, around the village greens of Devon during the summer months.

The intention was to tell stories that involved audiences on different levels so that there was something for everyone to enjoy, no matter their age or experience of theatre.

Since 1996, and when charitable incorporated, the company has developed numerous projects designed to engage wide-ranging rural communities in live performance.

These strands include a mix of participative activities, educational projects, semi-professional community projects and professional touring presentations. The company now also works in towns and larger centres as projects dictate.

Over 40 indoor and outdoor professional presentations have been created. These have variously involved commissioning writers or creative teams to respond to themes of rural and human interest, creating productions and then often touring them to up to 50 community venues such as fields, halls and community centres on a single tour

Skill-sharing and participatory work has taken numerous forms. These include summer youth theatre projects, workshops for amateur companies keen on building performance skills, collaborations with communities to develop celebratory guided walks and community play development.

Partnerships and Projects

Common Players has enjoyed positive relationships with a number of creative stakeholders. We now work on a project by project basis with other local and regional organisations, collaborating on mutually purposeful projects. Partners have included **Exeter Northcott Theatre**, **Exeter Bikeshed Theatre**, **Devon Arts in Schools Initiative**, **Exmoor National Park**, **Prom Prom Productions**, **The National Trust**, **Cygnets Theatre**, **East Devon Museums** and **Devon Libraries**.

Trustees & Director's Report (continued)

For the year ended 31st March 2022

Here follows a summary of activity in the financial year ended 31st March 2022, followed by more detail of activity over previous years.

Activity 2021-2022

This year, beginning in April saw the UK coming out of a second period of lockdown to protect from Covid-19. Through the previous winter with so much uncertainty over the forthcoming year we had determined that a focus for Common Players would be to create and tour a new outdoor work to communities and their spaces over the next summer. We felt that enclosing an audience in our new Lifeboat Theatre would not yet be feasible.

We also believed that people sought a context for gathering together in a relatively safe space. We saw theatre as the medium and we hoped that Covid regulations for gathering would be sufficiently relaxed by the time we got to summer. Our winter research and development time had discovered a strong appetite for this amongst our community promoters and together with a local food charity, www.catch77.org.uk we developed a plan to create **The Tuck Inn**, a touring performance and community feasting event based on the robin hood story. Our plan submitted to the Arts Council for support demonstrated how we would manage the Covid-safety of a 30 venue tour as well as engaging an open-to-all local event.

Our application was approved in June and propelled us into a busy and creative time, with a tour beginning in July and ending in September.

A separate, externally commissioned evaluation document chronicles the many successes of this project. It is available here <https://www.common-players.org.uk/cp-the-present>. A number of achievements are identified including the quality of the artwork, the engagement of two young apprentices, the support gained through micro-grants from very local organisations, the re-vivification of our volunteer promoter network, the incorporation of local performance activity around our visit, and the successful collaboration with a food charity to provide a self-contained touring event incorporating food and drink.

This positive evaluation encouraged Common Players to consider a similar event for the following year. As autumn turned to winter and fears of Covid rose again we decided it prudent to once again delay the development of The Lifeboat Theatre project. The year ended with a plan to adapt **Alice in Wonderland** into an outdoor touring performance, starting earlier in the year to co-incide with Queen Elizabeths' Jubilee celebrations. "The Queen" would tour to Devon communities to enjoy a tea party. We were successful with a minor bid to the Arts Council to undertake the foundation work for this in November and December and by January we had a detailed plan, incorporating apprentices once again, which we submitted for support.

During the year Common Players continued to make equipment available to small local groups for their creative endeavours.

Activity before 2021

Examples of partnership projects include **Keep Off The Path** which was a national 3-year touring environmental site-specific collaboration with **The National Trust**. With **Devon Arts In Schools Initiative** we created **Bloody Ambition**, an education programme inspiring teachers and pupils to wrestle practically with Shakespeare's **Macbeth**. In 2013, with **Exeter Northcott** we directed and produced a regional outdoor large-scale touring production of **Jerusalem** by Jez Butterworth. This was critically acclaimed and featured a unique blend of amateur and professional artists and support workers working together. A detailed evaluation of this project is accessible on our website.

We also explore other aspects of the region's rural culture through performance. An example of this is **Cider with Roadies**, which since 2006 has found different ways of creating theatrical and cultural events around the focus of a commissioned and practical sculpted apple press, **Pomona**. We have collaborated with **Prom Prom productions** to create **The Devon Apple Fair**, a day of apple related activities and performances touring the region.

In over 33 years of creating varied activity we have developed a significant network of volunteer promoters in many rural communities who work with us on promoting and supporting activities, connecting our work with people on the ground, who are not necessarily regular consumers of culture. We are proud to claim that we have successfully animated arts activity in rural communities not simply through our own work, but through sharing skills and enthusiasm with arts enthusiasts who go on to promote other activities in their locality.

Uncommon Players

In 2011 we formed the **Uncommon Players**. We began this loose ensemble to address two identified needs: performances of established plays are difficult for audiences to see in our region and at the same time we recognise that there is an untapped pool of talented actors and theatre artists in the area. With these factors combined we began to experiment with economically viable ways of producing high quality theatre using local volunteer performers guided by our professional core. The first production, **Speaking in Tongues** in 2011 was produced in collaboration with

Exeter Northcott Theatre, following a series of skill sharing workshops at **Exeter College**.

Alan Bennett's **Talking Heads** and Samuel Beckett's **Endgame** in collaboration with **Exeter Bikeshed theatre** have followed. Other Uncommon Players Productions and tours of productions include **Educating Rita** and **The Browning Version** in collaboration with **Cygnets Theatre, Exeter**.

International Links

From 2015-2018 we evolved an international partnership between the Mid Devon Town of **Crediton** and its German twin town Fulda to commemorate the 100th anniversary of The Great War. This project culminated in **Echoes of Wartime** an original and professional work combining artists from both locations performing in both languages. From research into the real stories of the people in the two towns during the war period, we worked with **Theatre Mittendrin** to create a structure and devise content for a bi-lingual and musical work, which told the stories of both communities during the time of shared conflict. Financial support was forthcoming from Arts Council England, Heritage Lottery Fund and the councils in Fulda and Crediton. A group of young people from each community were incorporated into the performances which took place in large community venues.

Living descendants of the characters that we featured were contacted through the research phases and invited to performances. Their attendance and positive reactions in both countries gave significant meaning to the event for the people living in both locations today and local media gave the initiative significant coverage. For those unable to attend a live performance, we created an adaptation for podcast which remains downloadable from iTunes.

The Lifeboat Theatre

In September 2019 we presented a pilot run of performances of **The Ancient Mariner** in our **Lifeboat Theatre**.

Since 2014 we had been preparing our salvaged commercial life-saving boat, and preparing a performance which would take place on board. The performance combines the narrative of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner with the theme of plastic pollution in the sea and is designed to work on beaches and in harbours for people who are not regular theatre-goers.

We secured the services of actor associates David Sterne (RSC, National Theatre and Pirates of the Caribbean) and Ben Tallamy (Four of Swords and Wandering Tiger Theatre) to perform in the devised event.

September of 2019 saw us prove the logistics of sailing the vessel to a mooring location, setting up for performances at low tide, welcoming an audience to the beach and presenting them with the experience of the performance both on the beach and inside the boat. We developed an embryonic website www.thelifeboattheatre.org.uk.

Audience responses were tremendously positive towards the performance over the five days of the pilot; and we learned more about the operational requirements of the activity as a whole. All this resulted in detailed bids for further support for a substantial tour in summer 2020 which were submitted to the Arts Council and other Trust Funders in December 2019.

In February 2020, due to the Pandemic, we were told that our applications were being nullified, with funding being diverted to other priorities. In April an application to the Arts Council for emergency support was declined. We took out an emergency loan to cover fixed costs of liability insurance for the moored lifeboat and other stored equipment. Applications for local authority Covid-Support discretionary funds were successful, the loan was repaid.

Financial stakeholders

For some years, 2003-2007, we were in receipt of regular annual funding from Arts Council England. Since then we have gained from them a number of project grants. We were generously supported by local authorities at County and District level, until recent years saw their budgets for our sort of work disappear. For various and appropriate projects we have gained financial support from the EU through **LEADER** projects, **Heritage Lottery Fund**, **Awards for All**, and from private trusts including the **Foyle Foundation**, the **Tubney Trust**, **Fulda City Council**, **The Belacqua Trust**, **The Self Heal Association** and the **Sylvia Waddilove Foundation** as well as the producing partners listed earlier.

Trustees & Director's Report (continued)

For the year ended 31st March 2022

Financial Review

Company Structure and financial position at the end of 2021-22

Since 2012 we have morphed into a small and low-cost organisation. Reductions in the availability of general core funding have challenged the model of employing permanent staff and holding premises. Now Common Players retains the loyalty of core artists and associates by encouraging them to develop projects to further the company mission. Projects are selected and supported by the company and developed into project-funded activities. Administrative overheads are minimized thus affording the company financial robustness for leaner times and avoiding the need to produce generalised work, which commands questionable commitment from artists, participants and audiences. The trustees have reviewed the financial position at the end of 2021-22 and are pleased to note that through a period of significantly increased activity, finances were stable.

Reserves Policy

The Company aims to maximise the use of available funds to further its creative work as far as this is commensurate with a prudent level of reserves. In this regard our policy is to set aside funds only for known or probable liabilities. Reserves held are matched to projects underway at the balance sheet date and total **£6818** (2021 £7041).

Risk Management

The major risks to which the charity is exposed, as identified by the trustees, have been reviewed and systems have been established to mitigate those risks.

Responsibilities of the Trustee Board

Company law requires the Trustee Board to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company as at the balance sheet date and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including income and expenditure, for the financial year. In preparing those financial statements, the Trustee Board should follow best practice and:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the company will continue on that basis.

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

The Trustees have had regard to guidance issued by the CHarity Commission on public benefit.

Conclusion

Through all the company developments, Common Players has striven to achieve its core mission: to create exciting, relevant and original theatre, both for and with communities who may otherwise lack local opportunity. We look forward to ongoing engagement with Devonshire and Westcountry Communities, as we continue to innovate artistically and organisationally. Our desire is that the administration costs of our work are kept to a minimum and that the artistic quality and content continues to bring new audiences and participants together to high quality and unique theatre experiences.

With Thanks

The Common Players most valuable resource continues to be the energies of our active and enthusiastic team who continue to find imaginative and creative solutions to meet the challenge of delivering artistic and efficacious work. I wish to express my thanks to the entire team; directors, administrators, trustees, actors, musicians, designers, sculptors, writers and the numerous volunteer community supporters who together help create our memorable theatre and events. Particular thanks go to the continued energy and creativity of our Artistic Director, Anthony Richards.

Richard Feltham, Trustee
on behalf of all the trustees

20th November 2022

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees and Directors

For the year ended 31st March 2022

as set out on pages 8-12.

Respective responsibilities of the trustees and examiner

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- <> examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- <> to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act), and
- <> to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning such any matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect:

- <> accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; or
- <> the accounts do not accord with such records; or
- <> the accounts do not comply with relevant accounting requirements under section 396 of the Charities Act 2006 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- <> the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the Charities SOPR (FRS102)

I have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed by *Hannah Reynolds*

Name **Hannah Reynolds**
Address **21 Lovelace Gardens, Exeter, EX2 8XQ**
Date **22nd December 2022**

Statement of Financial Activities

For the year ended 31st March 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Incoming resources	3				
Charitable Activities:		1477	83873	85350	5070
Other (Covid Grants)		500		500	10469
Total Income		1977	83873	85850	15539
Resources expended	6				
Fundraising activities		0	0	0	0
Charitable activities:		2814	83259	86073	9917
Total Expenditure		2814	83259	86073	9917
Net income/ (expenditure)		(837)	614	(223)	5622
Transfers between funds				0	0
Net movement in funds		(837)	614	(223)	5622
Reconciliation of Funds:					
Total Funds Brought Forward		4311	2730	7041	1419
Total Funds Carried Forward		3474	3344	6818	7041

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.
All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

Balance Sheet
For the year ended 31st March 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	8	0	0	0	0
Current assets					
Debtors	9	1800	1800	3600	0
Cash at bank and in hand		5529		5529	7463
Total current assets		7329	1800	9129	7463
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	10	(422)	(89)	(511)	(422)
Net current assets		6907	1711	8618	7041
Total assets less current liabilities		6907	1711	8618	7041
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year	10	0	0	0	0
Total net assets		6907	1711	8618	7041
Funds of the Charity					
Restricted income funds			3344	3344	2730
Unrestricted funds		3474		3474	4311
Total funds		3474	3344	6818	7041

The company was entitled to the exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006. relating to small companies.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to small companies subject to the small companies regime and in accordance with FRS102 SORP

The notes at pages 9 to 12 form part of these accounts

Signed by : Richard Feltham, trustee and director on behalf of all the trustees & directors

Richard Feltham

20th November 2022

Signature of director authenticating accounts being sent to Companies House

Richard Feltham

Richard Feltham

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Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31st March 2022

1.1 Basis of accounting

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transactional value unless otherwise stated.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with:

- <> the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014
 - <> the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)
 - <> and the Companies Act 2011.
- The Common Players meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

1.2 Going Concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis.

1.3 Change of accounting policy

The accounts present a true and fair view and there is no change in accounting policy.

1.4 Change to accounting estimates

No changes to accounting estimates have occurred in the accounting period.

1.5 Material prior year errors

No material prior year errors have been identified in the reporting period.

2.1 Accounting policies

In preparing the accounts, the trustees have considered whether in applying the accounting policies required by FRS 102 and the Charities SORP FRS 102 the restatement of comparative items was required and decided that this was not applicable.

2.2 Income

Recognition Incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) when the company becomes entitled to the income, it is more likely than not that it will be received by the trustees and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Grants Grants and donations are included when the conditions for receipt are met.

The company has received Government grants in the year in relation to tangible fixed assets and these are credited to the income and expenditure account over the useful lives of the related assets.

2.3 Expenditure and liabilities

Recognition Expenditure is recognised on an accrual basis when a liability is incurred.

Charitable activities include all expenditure associated with the production of theatrical performances including both direct and support costs.

Governance Governance costs include those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory obligations of the charity. They are not shown separately from other support costs

Creditors These are measured on initial recognition at settlement amount.

2.4 Assets

Tangible fixed assets These are capitalised if they can be used for more than one year and cost at least £500

They are valued at cost and depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:

- <> Equipment - 25% straight line
- <> Motor Vehicles - 25% straight line

Debtors These are measured on initial recognition at settlement amount.

3. Analysis of Income

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2022	Total 2021
Charitable Activities:	£	£	£	£
Government Grants (note 4)	500	3625	4125	10469
Other Grants & Sponsorship (note 4)		60950	60950	4320
Productions		18698	18698	0
Apple Press	300		300	250
Community Equipment Hire	600		600	500
Podcast & Video Fees	577	600	1177	
Total Charitable Activities	1977	83873	85850	15539

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

For the year ended 31st March 2022

4. Analysis of Receipts of Grants

	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
East Devon District Council - Routes for Routes	3625	
Mid Devon District Council - Grants re COVID	500	10469
Total Government Grants	4125	10469
Arts Council	48641	4320
The Self Heal Association	2000	
Livewest Homes Ltd	1000	
Various Rural Parishes and Councils	6809	
Belacqua Charitable Trust	2500	
Total Other Grants	60950	4320

5. Donated goods, facilities or services

The charity has benefited from the work of volunteers on individual projects. This value has not been recognised in the accounts.

6. Expenditure

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Charitable activities:				
Productions		80921	80921	4421
Apple Press	324		324	0
Community Equipment	872		872	641
Support Costs (note 7)	1618	2338	3956	2623
Depreciation			0	2232
Total Expenditure	2814	83259	86073	9917

7. Support costs

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Website & IT	286		286	186
Insurance	1332	776	2108	2109
Accountancy & Legal Fees		1393	1393	328
Printing, Postage & Stationery		169	169	0
Total Expenditure	1618	2338	3956	2623

8. Tangible fixed assets

	Plant, machinery and motor vehicles £	Fixtures, fittings and equipment £	Total £
Cost			
At 1st April 2021	6500	57738	64238
Additions			
Disposals			
At 31st March 2022	6500	57738	64238
Depreciation			
At 1st April 2021	6500	57738	64238
on Disposals			
Charge for the year	0	0	0
At 31st March 2022	6500	57738	64238

Net book values
At 31st March 2022
At 31st March 2021

0	0
0	0

0
0

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

For the year ended 31st March 2022

9. Analysis of debtors

Trade Debtors

2022	2021
£	£
1800	0

10.1 Analysis of creditors

Creditors : amounts falling due within one year

Trade Creditors

Accruals

2022	2021
£	£
89	
422	422
511	422

Detailed Income and Expenditure

For the year ended 31st March 2022

		Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2022 £ Total	2021 £ Total
<u>Income</u>					
Grants	East Devon District Council - Routes for Routes		3625	3625	0
	Mid Devon District Council - Grants re COVID	500		500	10469
	Arts Council		48641	48641	4320
	The Self Heal Association		2000	2000	0
	Livewest Homes Ltd		1000	1000	
	Various Rural Parishes and Councils		6809	6809	
	Belacqua Charitable Trust		2500	2500	0
	Total Grants	500	64575	65075	14789
Other	Box Office-The Tuck Inn		18698	18698	0
	Video Fee for Villages in Action		600	600	
	Podcast for Fulda	577		577	
	Apple Press	300		300	250
	Community Equipment Hire	600		600	500
	Total Income	1977	83873	85850	15539
<u>Expenditure</u>					
Productions	Set, Costumes, Props inc Safety Kit & Certification		15011	15011	(432)
	Set Infrastructure			0	777
	Lighting & Sound		1640	1640	0
	Marketing		7057	7057	0
	Rehearsals		5211	5211	0
	Touring		6188	6188	826
	People		43664	43664	3250
	Evaluation and other		2150	2150	
	Total production costs	0	80921	80921	4421
	Apple Press	324		324	0
	Community Equipment	872		872	641
	Total other charitable activity costs	1196	0	1196	641
	Website & IT	286		286	186
	Insurance	1332	776	2108	2109
	Accountancy & Legal Fees		1393	1393	328
	Printing , Postage & Stationery		169	169	0
		1618	2338	3956	2623
				0	
	Total Expenditure	2814	83259	86073	7685
	Depreciation	0	0	0	2232

Surplus/ (Deficit) for the year	(837)	614	(223)	5622
Funds Brought Forward	4311	2730	7041	1419
Transfer between funds				
Funds Carried Forward	3474	3344	6818	7041