BLACK COUNTRY TOURING

England & Wales · Charity number 1080608

Details

Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	03446320
Registered	2000-05-08
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	c/o Thimblemill Library Thimblemill Road Smethwick West Midlands B67 5RJ
Phone	01215337129
Email	hello@bctouring.co.uk
Website	www.bctouring.org.uk

Activities

Objects: TO PROMOTE, MAINTAIN, IMPROVE AND ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC BY THE ENCOURAGEMENT AND PRACTICE OF THE ARTS BY FOSTERING AND PROMOTING FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC THE IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF ARTISTIC KNOWLEDGE, TASTE, UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION OF THE ARTS AND IN PARTICULAR BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY, TO PROVIDE ARTS BASED ACTIVITIES AND ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION BY ALL SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY IN SUCH ACTIVITIES IN THE WOLVERHAMPTON, WALSALL, DUDLEY AND SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH AND THEIR ENVIRONS

Activities: Black Country Touring works in partnership with Young Promoters and Community Promoters, supporting local communities to bring professional regional, national and international high quality theatre, dance and film into the Black Country. We also create new work born out of contemporary Black Country stories for both local and national audiences.

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Classification

- **How:** Provides Human Resources, Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** Arts/culture/heritage/science
- **Who:** Children/young People, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** WOLVERHAMPTON, WALSALL, DUDLEY AND SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH AND THEIR ENVIRONS
- Dudley
- Sandwell
- Walsall
- Wolverhampton

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£680,499	£616,984	£249,270	10
2024-03-31	£475,576	£556,261	£185,755	9
2023-03-31	£474,708	£474,059	-	-
2022-03-31	£392,820	£349,607	-	-
2021-03-31	£299,844	£236,190	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Carla Priddon	Chair	2018-01-24
Anna Webster		2023-10-10
Emma Worrall		2023-04-18
IMTIAZ DUNGARWALLA		2013-01-09
Julie Mckirdy		2017-10-07
Michelle Bould		2023-10-10
Rachael Magson		2023-04-18
Rupinder Sandhu		2023-04-18

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BLACK COUNTRY TOURING

England & Wales - Charity number 1080608

Accounts

ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

BLACK COUNTRY TOURING

Top: Flying with Strings by Sarah Vigars at Bear Books
Bottom: Beached by Strangeface at West Smethwick Park Pavillion. Both part of Smethwick Puppetry Festival
Cover: Wild at Brierley Hill Civic

About Us

Founded in 1997, **Black Country Touring** (BCT) addresses the historic lack of access to the arts in one of the UK's most culturally under-served regions. We believe the arts can transform lives - building skills, confidence and connection.

VISION

A Black Country where everyone can experience inspiring, high-quality creative work in their community—where income, background or age are never a barrier to access.

MISSION

To create opportunities for the region's diverse communities to programme, participate in, and experience theatre, dance and film that is accessible, relevant, and shaped by local voices.

Cultural inequality contributes to long-term educational and economic disadvantage; 44% of our audiences are from the lowest three income deciles, and 41% from the lowest in educational attainment.

We're committed to building a more equitable cultural landscape - one where creativity is powered by the communities we serve.

How we deliver

TOURING

Supporting local venues, volunteers and young people to programme professional touring theatre and dance in community venues and schools,

DEVELOPING

We nurture local artists, strengthen the capacity of community organisations and contribute to regional cultural strategies.

PRODUCING

We create and commission theatre, dance and digital projects that reflect the stories, identities and lived experiences of Black Country communities.

2024/25 Impact

38%

Audiences from an ethnically diverse background

467

Events

17,495

Audience & Participants

63

VENUES

20%

D/deaf or Disabled Audiences & Participants

97%

Excellent or Good Show Rating

Co-Chair's Statement

A Year of Growth, Development & Change

In 2024-25, Black Country Touring strengthened cultural provision in our region by improving access and participation in the arts, empowering communities to lead, and securing significant investment for the Black Country.

This year also marked the beginning of our shared role as Co-Chairs. We would like to warmly thank our predecessor, Tim Rushby, who served as Chair for seven years and as a trustee since 2006. His leadership and long-standing commitment to BCT have helped it grow its income, reach and impact.

At the Heart of Communities

Our flagship production, Wild, engaged hundreds of people in community gardens, libraries and arts venues and will tour nationally in 2025, sharing Black Country stories across the UK. We were pleased to continue our partnership with Black Country Living Museum, creating a site-specific piece exploring the heritage of the 1960s with the museum's incredible buildings as a backdrop and stimulus.

Our Community Promoter network remained at the heart of our work, with local people programming an incredible 324 performances across 56 venues.

Through our touring scheme and related projects, BCT built skills, boosted confidence, and supported the freelance artists and touring companies who are vital to England's cultural life. Rekindle and Libraries Unbound brought powerful performances into public libraries across Sandwell and Wolverhampton.

Working Together for the Black Country

We are grateful to our partners, including Spectra, Parakeet, Multistory, Creative Black Country, Sandwell Cultural Compact, Sandwell Libraries and Museums, and the Black Country Living Museum, whose work and collaborative spirit are driving cultural growth in the Black Country.

Finally, we offer our thanks to the BCT team, promoters, stewards and volunteers for their energy, care and commitment, and to our fellow trustees for their time, insight and dedication. We are also grateful to our audience and participants, who so often greet touring theatre companies, our productions and our team with enthusiasm, warmth and applause.

Looking Ahead

The achievements of 2024/25 reaffirm our belief that investing in local people and places leads to a fairer, richer and more relevant cultural landscape. Autumn 2025 is a key milestone in BCT's history. Co-Artistic Directors, Frances Land and Steve Johnstone, who have led the organisation with integrity, ambition and unwavering passion for more than 28 years, will step down from their shared role. Their connection and commitment to the region is incomparable, and we commend and celebrate their dedication to improving the lives of local people through so many productions, projects and development opportunities.

We are delighted to welcome Genevieve Say as our new Artistic Director, who, alongside Executive Director Matt Andrews and the Board of Trustees, will lead BCT into its next phase. As the cultural sector continues to navigate change and uncertainty, BCT remains grounded in its values and clear in its purpose. With a new leadership team in place, we are now working together to shape a bold strategy for 2026-29, which builds on our legacy, responds to the needs of our communities, and takes us in new and exciting creative directions.

Carla Priddon & Imtiaz Dungarwalla
Co-Chairs of the Board

The Wild cast and creative team in rehearsals.

Wild - a BCT Production

Laika the Space Dog by Lori Hopkins

Hello Birds by Jasmine Cole Productions at Thimblemill Library

Financial Performance

Black Country Touring ended the 2024/25 financial year in a financially resilient position, with growing capacity and reach supported by the current Arts Council England NPO investment. The uplift in our core funding has strengthened the organisation's ability to plan, deliver and develop ambitious work across the region, while maintaining healthy reserves and supporting a sustainable team structure.

Total income for the year rose to £680,499, compared with £550,576 in 2023/24 and £474,708 in 2022/23 – a 43% increase over two years. This growth reflects the increased capacity provided by greater NPO funding and the success of targeted fundraising efforts, which have expanded our reach and deepened community engagement.

During the year, BCT secured a £74,500 grant from the Inclusive Communities Fund to support the Smethwick Arts Collective, a further year of flexible funding of £75,000 from The Players of the People's Postcode Lottery, and a £10,000 grant from the West Midlands Combined Authority for the Smethwick Puppetry Festival.

We also received £10,000 from the Wolverhampton Cultural Compact and the Commonwealth Games Legacy Enhancement Fund for work with Wolverhampton Libraries, and worked closely with Sandwell Council to bring additional theatre and dance performances to local libraries and museums as part of their festival programming.

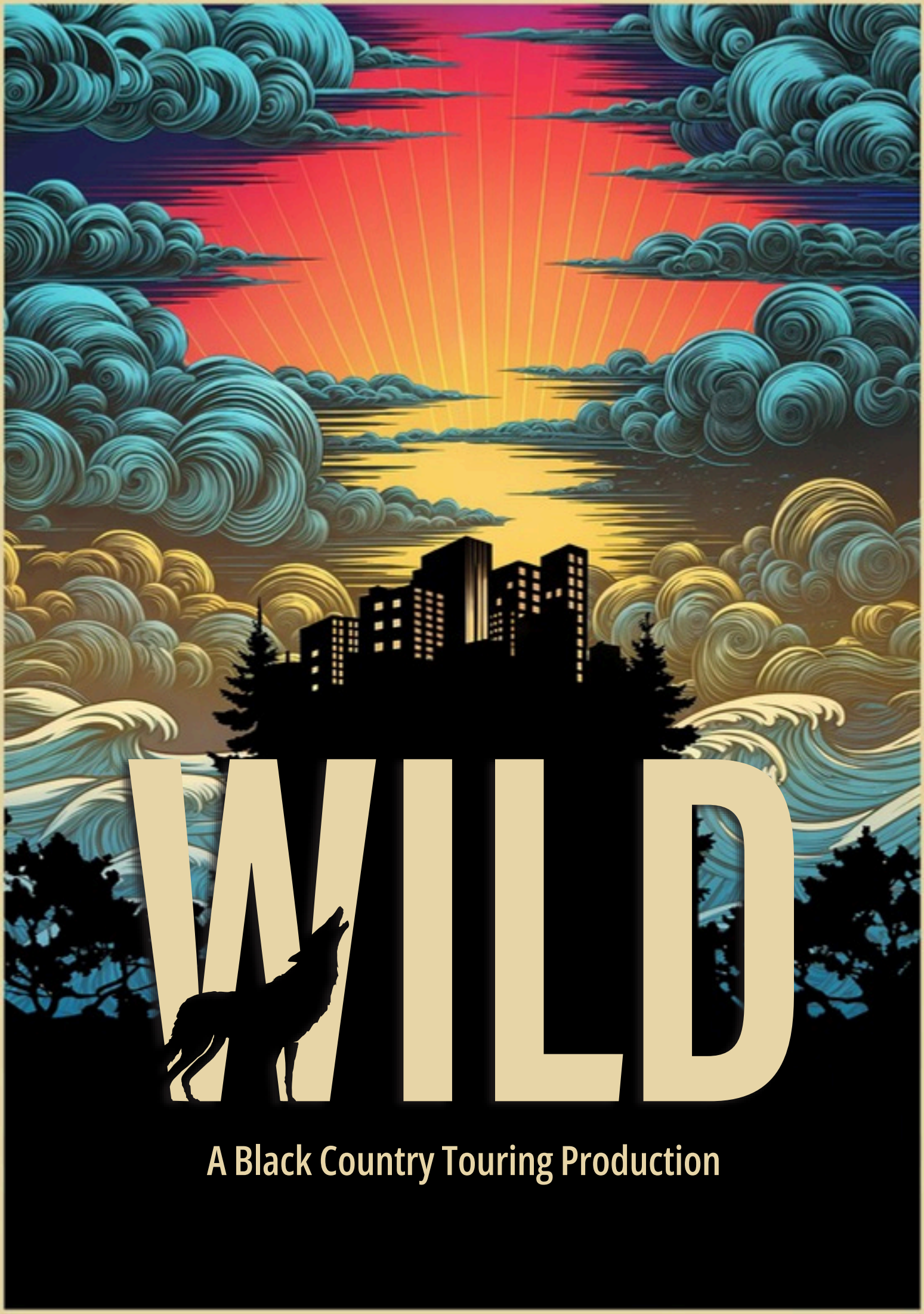
At year end, BCT held a higher than usual level of carried-forward funds. This reflects the timing of multi-year grants and planned investment in programme delivery and organisational development. These funds will support continued delivery, maintain core capacity, and underpin the transition into our 2026–29 Strategy period.

These projects and their impact are only possible thanks to the belief and support of our funders, including:

Arts Council England
The Players of the People's Postcode Lottery
The Heart of England Community Foundation
United by 2022
Film Hub Midlands
Sandwell Council
West Midlands Combined Authority
Wolverhampton City Council
The Commonwealth Games Legacy Investment Fund

We are deeply grateful for their investment and confidence in our work.

Flying with Strings by Sarah Vigars


WILD
A Black Country Touring Production

Wild - A BCT Production

‘Wild’ was informed by conversations and stories that we collected from over 70 people across rural, urban and seaside locations about what wild means to them. The production wove these stories together with immersive music and soundscapes, and invited the audience to reflect on their own definitions of Wild, fostering a deeper appreciation of both nature and human nature.

Wild was the second part of a two-phase project that involved working with four community gardens across the Black Country.

These gardens provided contact with most of the people interviewed for the production. Our aim was to use the experiences of the people of the Black Country to create a touring show which would feel as immersive as possible. The piece toured the original four community gardens and various other venues, including libraries, community and art spaces and a civic hall,

in October 2024. 9 performances took place across 8 venues, with a total of 581 audience members. There were over 70 participants involved in the research phase, and 11 artists were employed as part of the production.

Following its successful tour of the Black Country, Wild will be touring in community venues across the country this Autumn.

Audience feedback:

“Awesome, intense, real, honest, gripping, brave, fun, moving, shocking, memorable, vivid, vibrant!”

“I really enjoyed the way the scenes wove between stories, anecdotes and journeys, it was great.”

“Triggered visceral emotion and reminded me how wonderful it is to be alive and to be a creature in such a powerful world!”

Community Promoters

The **Community Promoters** scheme enables local people to take the lead in bringing professional theatre and performances and film screenings, and arts events to their neighbourhoods. Our Promoters are based in local venues such as community centres, libraries and schools, where they select shows, market events, and host performances with support and guidance from BCT.

This year, we worked closely with our Community Promoters to programme 324 performances in 56 venues as well as 64 screenings.

Highlights included:

- Our Promoter's busiest year ever, with over 324 performances and 13,072 attending in community venues.
- We worked with Sandwell Council to programme 24 performances as part of the Sandwell Arts Festival. With free theatre events for all ages this was a jam-packed summer offer!
- Supporting the Big Kids Theatre Weekend at West Smethwick Park, which saw over 600 people decend on the Park and Pavillion to enjoy a weekend of fun!
- Continuing to support Wednesbury Day with high quality walkabout acts such as The Wrong Brothers and a performance of Laika The Space Dog. Bringing together the people of Wednesbury to celebrate the historical town through the arts.

The scheme not only broadens access to arts experiences, but also empowers residents to shape their local cultural offer, helping them grow in confidence, develop valuable skills, and build stronger connections within their communities.

"The Toymaker" by Infamous Arts at the Dorothy Parkes Centre, Smethwick, December 2024

"Alice and the Library Tree" by B'Opera at Oldbury Library, July 2024

"Tell Me A Story" by HandMade Theatre at Caldmore Community Garden, Walsall, July 2024

"Pepper and Honey" by Notnow Collective at Brasshouse Community Centre, Smethwick, November 2024

Rekindle

Rekindle, a three-year project funded by Arts Council England and led by Creative Arts East, is a nationwide initiative pairing five arts organisations with their local library services.

BCT are collaborating with Sandwell Library Service to bring more creativity and culture into five Sandwell Libraries: Smethwick Library, Central Library, Wednesbury Library, Tipton Library and Blackheath Library. We are also working with library staff to build their skills and confidence in making exciting events happen in their library.

In 2024-25, Rekindle delivered 37 shows, workshops and cinema events, with performances aimed at both adult and family audiences. A significant highlight was that the entirety of the programme was hand-picked by the library staff themselves. The project helped foster long-term relationships between libraries and their audiences.

Libraries Unbound

Libraries Unbound, a 5-month project funded by the Commonwealth Games Legacy Enhancement Fund, allowed us to develop a new programme with local libraries to Wolverhampton, based on Rekindle.

We collaborated with Wolverhampton Library Service and Gazebo Theatre to bring high quality theatre and workshops to 4 library spaces: Bilston Library, Bob Jones Community Hub, Central Library and Whitmore Reans Library.

The project delivered 24 family focused events across the 4 libraries, at no cost to audiences. It allowed us to develop our relationship with Wolverhampton Libraries, and allowed them to programme events that they would not otherwise have had the capacity or funds to programme.

Spotlight on Smethwick

Our partnership work in Smethwick continues to grow in scale, ambition and reach, supporting local creativity while improving access to the arts for children, families and communities.

In 2024-25, we delivered two major strands of work in the town: the **Smethwick Puppetry Festival** and the **Smethwick Arts Collective**. Together, they **reached over 3,400 people through more than 130 free or Pay What You Can events** across local community venues.

The Smethwick Puppetry Festival, now in its second year, took place during February half term and expanded significantly from its 2024 debut. With strong support from our Community Promoters and a focus on family-friendly, low-cost activities, the festival welcomed 1,410 attendees – with many events selling out in advance.The programme featured 26 performances, 9 creative workshops, Q&A panels, a short film night, and an automata exhibition across 11 venues.

The **Smethwick Arts Collective**, a new partnership between Black Country Touring, Spectra, Parakeet and local venues, offered an extended programme of 96 theatre events, workshops and early years stay & play sessions over a 6 month pilot phase. These activities reached 2,026 participants and were designed in collaboration with local venues and community organisations to ensure accessibility and relevance.

We received overwhelmingly positive feedback for both projects, highlighting what an incredibly creative place Smethwick is. Looking ahead, we plan to grow both strands: building the festival into a flagship event for Smethwick and developing the Collective as a model for deeper, long-term community engagement.

Thanks to The Players of the People's Postcode Lottery, West Midlands Combined Authority, Sandwell Council and Arts Council England for supporting the Puppetry Festival, and to The WMCA Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund, The Heart of England Community Foundation, United by 2022 and Arts Council England for supporting Smethwick Arts Collective.

"Beached" by Strangeface at West Smethwick Park Pavilion, part of Smethwick Puppetry Festival

"Really great program, with some brilliant family events, good timing over Feb half term."

"Absolute pure magic that you can't experience anywhere else."

"Such a brilliant event and beautiful puppetry."

- Audience feedback from Smethwick Puppetry Festival

"Being able to offer accessible performances means that we can share the experience of live theatre with people who may not usually have the opportunity."

"Working with Smethwick Arts has enabled us to further foster a sense of community while promoting engagement and cultural enrichment."

- Christina from Dorothy Parkes Centre

"Flying With Strings" by Sarah Vigars at Bear Bookshop, part of Smethwick Puppetry Festival

Stay & Play session by Parakeet, part of Smethwick Arts Collective

Make & Move workshop by Spectra, part of Smethwick Arts Collective

Audience feedback:

"Nice to see cultural diversity and representation in history. Would like to see more of this."

"Great use of authentic space and mix of people. I did not know that about Oldbury! Thank you!"

"Loved the names and diverse actors... it brought hidden history to life."

Crossing The Line

at Black Country Living Museum

It's 1958 in a drop forge in Oldbury. A wild cat strike is in progress. A faulty machine has injured a worker and it has brought the factory to a halt. The cleaner is looking for the resulting mess to clear up and an irate businessman turns up looking for his missing consignment of hammers. There's more going on here than meets the eye…

Based on research and original interviews, 'Crossing the Line' was performed over five Friday evenings in August 2024 as a part of Summer Lates at the Black Country Living Museum.

The performance was a continuation of our ongoing relationship with the Black Country Living Museum, where we explore together the telling of local stories in and around the museum's site. It follows on from many years of collaboration and directly from the success of the previous year's show, 'A Spanner in the Works'.

Using the Joe's Tools drop forge as its setting, 'Crossing the Line' brought together three Black Country Touring performers - Elexi Walker, Jack Trow and Vimal Korpal - with historic characters from the Museum to create a rich and entertaining 20 minute performance, which repeated several times over each Friday evening.

Our collaboration with the Black Country Living Museum will continue in 2025, which will see BCT collaborate with Jaivant Patel Dance Company as part of South Asian Heritage Month in the Black Country.

Stories of Sandwell

This year, we developed two powerful digital projects that platform underrepresented voices and use film and audio to deepen public understanding and empathy.

In partnership with **The Space, Bearwood Community Hub** and **Borough of Sanctuary Sandwell**, we produced Sanctuary in Sandwell, a series of four short films sharing the lived experiences of people who've sought refuge in Sandwell. Each film features award-winning poet Bohdan Piasecki in conversation with a local sanctuary seeker, culminating in a bespoke poem performed within 24 hours. The resulting films challenge negative migration narratives and celebrate human resilience and hope.

Our collaboration with **Sandwell Visually Impaired** (SVI) and artist **Graeme Rose** resulted in Blathering with SVI, a three-part podcast exploring the daily experiences of visually impaired people - the highs and the lows - in their own words.

Conversations range from perceptions of colour and dreams to water and memory, revealing nuanced reflections rarely heard in mainstream media. The episodes are enriched by evocative soundscapes from **Think/ Write/ Fly** (artist **Adrian B. Earle**).

Funders & Supporters

Black Country Touring relies on the dedication of our local volunteers and venues. Without their endless enthusiasm for their communities and the arts, our work would not be possible. We are also grateful to all of the individual donors who have supported our work this year.

Cover image, Wild photos and Crossing the Line photos © Anand Chhabra
Smethwick Puppetry Festival and Smethwick Arts Collective photos © Photography by Fernando

Black Country Touring
c/o Thimblemill Library
Thimblemill Road
Smethwick
West Midlands
B67 5RJ

Charity No: 1080608
Company No: 3446320

Black Country Touring is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

BLACK COUNTRY TOURING

www.bctouring.org.uk

Company registration number: 3446320

Charity registration number: 1080608

Black Country Touring

(A company limited by guarantee)

Annual Report and Financial Statements

for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

Bissell & Brown Midlands Ltd
Charter House
56 High Street
Sutton Coldfield
B72 1UJ

Black Country Touring

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Black Country Touring

Trustees' Report

The trustees, who are directors for the purposes of company law, present the annual report together with the financial statements of the charitable company for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Structure, governance and management

Nature of governing document

The company is limited by guarantee and does not have a share capital. It is governed by Memorandum and Articles of Association and was incorporated on 8th October 1997. It was registered as a Charity on 8th May 2000.

Organisational structure

Chief Executives & Co-Artistic directors : Steve Johnstone & Frances Johnstone (retired August 2025)
Artistic Director: Genevieve Say (appointed June 2025)
Company Secretary: Matthew Andrews
Executive Director: Matthew Andrews
General Manager: Corinne Morris
Promotion Manager: Natalie Kidman
Creative Producer: Sampira Al-Fihri (resigned April 2025)
Marketing Co-ordinator: Amrit Kaur Juss
Community Programme Coordinators: Donna Clarkson, Suki Sohi
Administrator: Laura Leech

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

Recruitment and Appointment of New Trustees
1 Members of the Committee will be invited on the basis of their working expertise and experience, and/or their background and other experiences and skills. The committee as a whole will aim to reflect the broad make-up and cultural diversity of the Black Country and the West Midlands.

2 As a general rule, there should be a relationship between the Company and a person proposed for Committee membership. The person proposed should know something of Black Country Touring's work. This criterion does not apply to people offering specific skills.

3 The time limits for membership laid down in the constitution should be applied consciously, rather than renewing automatically.

4 There should be a provision for new members to be brought on for a fixed term of one or two years in the first instance, with the possibility of extension to full membership, after review. (Co-options for specific projects or developments are already laid down in the constitution)

In applying these criteria Black Country Touring will take a pro-active approach in fully operating its policy of equal opportunities.

Induction and training of trustees

All proposed new members must be provided with an induction pack and have a formal discussion with a member of the Company's staff, before their final approval by the Committee.

These guidelines run alongside the terms of Black Country Touring's Articles of Association.

Black Country Touring

Trustees' Report

Objectives and activities

Public benefit

In the exercise of their powers as charity trustees, they have had due regard to the published guidance from the Charity Commission on the operation of the public benefit requirement, and the aims of the charity are carried out for the public benefit.

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the requirements of section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

Objects and aims

The objects of the Company are to promote, maintain, improve and advance the education of the public by the encouragement and practice of the arts, by fostering and promoting for the benefit of the public the improvement and development of artistic knowledge, taste, understanding, and application of the arts and in particular but not exclusively, to provide arts based activities and encourage participation by all sections of the community in such activities in the Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley and Sandwell Metropolitan Boroughs and their environs.

Trustees and officers

The trustees and officers serving during the year and since the year end were as follows:

Trustees:	Imtiaz Dungarwalla
	Carla Priddon
	Julie McKirdy
	Akila Mclean
	Rachael Magson
	Rupinder Sandhu
	Michelle Bould
	Anna Webster
	Emma Worrall
Other Officers:	Timothy Rushby (resigned 1 November 2025)

Achievements and performance

Review of charitable activities undertaken is included in the attached Annual Report.

Financial review

Review of financial position is included in the attached Annual Report.

Policy on reserves

The income and expenditure of the charity fluctuates according to the pattern of grant and project income secured. As the Charity employs a number of staff, the Management Committee (Trustees) consider that reserves are needed to provide for an orderly wind-down in the event of an unexpected reduction in the funds secured. The Charity is also required on occasion to incur the costs of developing and researching work before the grants which have been awarded, and other income, are actually received. The Charity therefore needs a level of reserves for cash flow reasons. In the opinion of the Management Committee the reserves of the Charity are appropriate for its scale of operation.

Black Country Touring

Trustees' Report

Reference and Administrative Details

Charity Registration Number:	1080608
Company Registration Number:	3446320
	The charity is incorporated in England and Wales.
Registered Office:	Thimblemill Library Thimblemill Rd Smethwick B67 5RJ
Principal Office:	Thimblemill Library Thimblemill Rd Smethwick B67 5RJ
Independent Examiner:	Bissell & Brown Midlands Ltd Charter House 56 High Street Sutton Coldfield B72 1UJ
Bankers:	The Co-operative Bank

The annual report was approved by the trustees of the charity on 28 October 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

Carla Priddon

Carla Priddon
Trustee

Black Country Touring

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees (who are also the directors of Black Country Touring for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland".

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards, comprising FRS 102 have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that can disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are 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 are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Approved by the trustees of the charity on 28 October 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

Carla Priddon

Carla Priddon
Trustee

Black Country Touring

Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of Black Country Touring ('the Company')

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the Company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of Bissell & Brown Midlands Ltd, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of Black Country Touring as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act 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
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities [applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)].

I have no concerns and 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.

Bissell & Brown Midlands Ltd

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Paul Matthews FCCA
Bissell & Brown Midlands Ltd
Charter House
56 High Street
Sutton Coldfield
B72 1UJ

28 October 2025

Black Country Touring

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2025
(Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Income and Endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	2	3,247	-	3,247	659
Charitable activities	10	414,595	261,898	676,493	549,163
Other income		759	-	759	754
Total Income		418,601	261,898	680,499	550,576
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	11	(394,555)	(222,429)	(616,984)	(556,261)
Total Expenditure		(394,555)	(222,429)	(616,984)	(556,261)
Net income/(expenditure)		24,046	39,469	63,515	(5,685)
Net movement in funds		24,046	39,469	63,515	(5,685)
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		115,755	70,000	185,755	191,440
Total funds carried forward	7	139,801	109,469	249,270	185,755

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

Black Country Touring

(Registration number: 3446320)
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2025

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
Current assets			
Debtors	4	50,012	16,651
Cash at bank and in hand	5	213,791	176,319
		263,803	192,970
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	6	(14,533)	(7,215)
Net assets		249,270	185,755
Funds of the charity:			
Restricted income funds			
Restricted funds	7	109,469	70,000
Unrestricted income funds			
Unrestricted funds		139,801	115,755
Total funds	7	249,270	185,755

For the financial year ending 31 March 2025 the charity was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the charity to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476; and
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

The financial statements on pages 6 to 14 were approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue on 28 October 2025 and signed on their behalf by:

Carla Priddon

Carla Priddon
Trustee

1 Accounting policies

Summary of significant accounting policies and key accounting estimates
The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

Statement of compliance
The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with 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)) (issued in October 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Basis of preparation
Black Country Touring meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

Going concern
The Trustees have considered budgets and cash flow forecasts through to November 2025, and the level of post year-end support received from Arts Council England. On this basis, the trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern nor any significant areas of uncertainty that affect the carrying value of assets held by the charity.

Income and endowments
All income is recognised once the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of the income receivable can be measured reliably.

Donations and legacies

Donations are recognised when the charity has been notified in writing of both the amount and settlement date. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance by the charity before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that these conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Expenditure
All expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to that expenditure, it is probable settlement is required and the amount can be measured reliably. All costs are allocated to the applicable expenditure heading that aggregate similar costs to that category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of resources, with central staff costs allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use. Other support costs are allocated based on the spread of staff costs.

Charitable activities

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Taxation

The charity is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

Tangible fixed assets

Individual fixed assets costing £500.00 or more are initially recorded at cost, less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation is provided on tangible fixed assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value, over their expected useful economic life as follows:

Asset class	Depreciation method and rate
Equipment	33.33% straight-line

Trade creditors

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if the charity does not have an unconditional right, at the end of the reporting period, to defer settlement of the creditor for at least twelve months after the reporting date. If there is an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least twelve months after the reporting date, they are presented as non-current liabilities.

Trade creditors are recognised initially at the transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Fund structure

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees' discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Restricted income funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

2 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Donations and legacies;			
Donations from individuals	3,247	3,247	259
Trusts and foundations	-	-	400
	3,247	3,247	659

3 Tangible fixed assets

	Furniture and equipment £	Total £
Cost		
At 1 April 2024	24,105	24,105
Disposals	(5,903)	(5,903)
At 31 March 2025	18,202	18,202
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2024	24,105	24,105
Eliminated on disposals	(5,903)	(5,903)
At 31 March 2025	18,202	18,202
Net book value		
At 31 March 2025	-	-
At 31 March 2024	-	-

4 Debtors

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade debtors	50,012	16,651

5 Cash and cash equivalents

	2025 £	2024 £
Cash at bank	213,791	176,319

6 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade creditors	538	-
Other taxation and social security	7,295	5,515
Accruals	6,700	1,700
	14,533	7,215

7 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2025 £
Unrestricted funds					
General					
General unrestricted	95,755	418,601	(394,555)	(30,000)	89,801
Designated					
Arts Council NPO Projects	20,000	-	-	30,000	50,000
Total unrestricted funds	115,755	418,601	(394,555)	-	139,801
Restricted funds					
Heart of England Community Foundation	-	73,569	(73,569)	-	-
Wolverhampton CC	-	10,000	(10,000)	-	-
Creative Arts East	-	63,033	(34,423)	-	28,610
Film Hub Midlands	-	15,000	(10,141)	-	4,859
The Space	-	6,797	(6,797)	-	-
West Midlands Combined Authority	-	18,499	(18,499)	-	-
The Peoples Postcode Lottery	70,000	75,000	(69,000)	-	76,000
Total restricted funds	70,000	261,898	(222,429)	-	109,469
Total funds	185,755	680,499	(616,984)	-	249,270

The increase in the designated fund will be used for making a new production in 2026/27 and supporting some of our costs as we exit the £75k per year funding from PPL.

8 Staff costs

The monthly average number of persons (including senior management / leadership team) employed by the charity during the year expressed as full time equivalents was as follows:

	2025 No	2024 No
Staff	10	9

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year.

9 Trustees remuneration and expenses

No trustees, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year.

No trustees have received any reimbursed expenses from the charity during the year.

10 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Fees and shows	64,432	-	64,432	99,709
Arts Council core grant	307,225	-	307,225	307,225
Programme projects and production income	6,100	-	6,100	20,057
Black Country Living Museum	15,000	-	15,000	22,948
Local authorities project income	21,838	10,000	31,838	24,224
Post Code Lottery	-	75,000	75,000	75,000
Heart of England Community Foundation	-	73,569	73,569	-
Creative Arts East	-	63,033	63,033	-
Film Hub	-	15,000	15,000	-
The Space	-	6,797	6,797	-
West Midlands Combined Authority	-	18,499	18,499	-
	414,595	261,898	676,493	549,163

11 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Black Country Cinema cost	10,127	-	10,127	23,649
Productions & projects	70,820	116,441	187,261	152,067
Shows & performances	52,777	-	52,777	19,701
Artistic directors	49,230	-	49,230	48,252
Marketing & publicity	16,024	-	16,024	15,194
Travelling & subsistence	5,800	-	5,800	2,979
Salaries & employers NI & pension	226,120	36,988	263,108	242,226
Doubtful debts	(2,680)	-	(2,680)	12,976
Training	3,876	-	3,876	3,886
Insurance	1,208	-	1,208	1,162
Rent	9,000	-	9,000	9,000
Computer/ network	1,747	-	1,747	784
Independent examination	1,837	-	1,837	1,700
Subscriptions	1,242	-	1,242	2,103
Equipment & replacements	-	-	-	10,760
Other costs	15,510	-	15,510	8,855
Bank charges	67	-	67	85
Depreciation	-	-	-	882
	462,705	153,429	616,134	556,261

12 Taxation

The charity is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation.

13 Charity status

The charity is limited by guarantee, incorporated in England and Wales, and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the trustees is liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the charity in the event of liquidation.

The principal place of business is:
Thimblemill Library
Thimblemill Rd
Smethwick
B67 5RJ

BLACK COUNTRY TOURING

England & Wales - Charity number 1080608

Accounts

BLACK COUNTRY TOURING

ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

Rajasthan Heritage Brass Band at Wednesbury Day

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CHAIR'S STATEMENT

TIM RUSHBY
Chair

The beginning of a new era for Black Country Touring

2023/24 marked a transformative year for Black Country Touring, as we proudly celebrated 25 years of bringing the arts to life across the region. It was a year not only of reflection but of remarkable growth and success, expanding our reach and deepening our impact. Thanks to the support of our funders, we are now able to work with more community partners, artists, and volunteers than ever before, strengthening our role at the heart of the Black Country's cultural landscape, fostering lasting connections, and broadening access to the arts in exciting new ways.

In times like these, when the arts are often seen as a luxury, we want to emphasise that they are far from it. The arts are not just a 'nice to have'—they are a necessity. Participation in the arts enhances people's lives, wellbeing, and outlook, contributing to a healthier, more empathetic society. We remain committed to ensuring everyone has access to the arts regardless of socio-economic barriers.

During the run-up to the new National Portfolio Organisation round of Arts Council funding, we developed our **Unbordered** strategy for 2023-26, reaffirming BCT's mission to bring people and communities together through theatre, dance, and film. As we moved from concept to delivery, this programme has only become more relevant to the world we live in today. Our programme addresses the pressing challenges of increasingly polarised politics, divisions within and between communities, and a cost of living crisis that weighs heavily on the already underfunded and deprived areas of the country in which we work. We want to unite people, foster empathy, and celebrate the rich tapestry of cultures that make the Black Country a vibrant and dynamic region.

We were thrilled to receive a 110% uplift in funding from Arts Council England (ACE) and rejoin their portfolio for 2023-2027. This significant increase allows the charity to work more deeply with community groups, partners, artists, and community champions. It also puts it on firmer financial ground, allowing us to cover core costs better and strengthen our team. This uplift was further supported by the **Esmée Fairbairn Foundation**, which has provided core funding over the past three years, including a **What's in Store** project grant and digital work during the pandemic.

We also acknowledge the incredible backing of **The Players of the People's Postcode Lottery**, whose three-year flexible funding has been transformative. Their support has enhanced our work with communities and helped us buffer against the rising costs due to the cost of living crisis. This unprecedented financial support from three organisations has released untapped potential within BCT, enhancing our impact, fundraising capacity, and artistic ambition after years of standstill funding. It helped us realise what could be possible with greater long-term investment in the charity. It has also allowed us to trial new initiatives, such as Pay What You Can ticketing, which has enabled people to attend BCT events during a time when many are forced to make difficult financial decisions.

ACE's funding uplift recognises the value of our ambitious plans in, and for, the Black Country. We are delighted to see many other Black Country-based arts organisations benefiting from increased investment in the region. From our work in communities, we know there is no shortage of appetite or enthusiasm for the arts here - there is an abundance. For too long, our communities have been underserved, overlooked, or excluded due to a lack of investment, discrimination, and elitism. The Arts Council's **Let's Create** strategy gave us renewed optimism as it aligns so closely with the mission and values that BCT has embodied for the past 25 years, emphasising creativity at all stages of life and expanding access across England.

In October 2023, we celebrated our quarter-century milestone with a performance at one of our most beloved and successful venues—Thimblemill Library, which we now proudly call home. Rather than hosting a closed event, we invited friends of the company, supporters, and local audiences to join us in experiencing the joyous **Mountain Music** by Little Bulb Theatre and Farnham Maltings, accompanied by a samosa or two. It was a fitting celebration of our journey and the community that has supported us.

Mountain Music by Little Bulb & Farnham Maltings

I want to express my sincere gratitude to **Sandwell Council** and **Wolverhampton City Council** for their continued support of Black Country Touring, even amidst the increasing financial pressures faced by local authorities. Their commitment to the transformative impact of the arts is vital in making their boroughs better places to live.

This year, we also undertook a successful board recruitment drive, which led to the addition of five new members to our management committee. These new appointments bring a wealth of skills, diverse perspectives, and fresh ideas to ensure Black Country Touring continues to be guided and supported in its mission. Their varied backgrounds reflect the diversity of the communities we serve, and their expertise will be invaluable as we work to achieve our strategic aims and navigate the challenges ahead.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank members of the board, new and established, for their continued commitment to BCT, and their energy, passion and enthusiasm for all we do. However, my greatest thanks must go to our hugely dedicated and highly skilled team, our promoters - the essential local champions and heroes that without whom we wouldn't be able to deliver large parts of our programme, and our brilliantly talented associate artists. Thank you for delivering a programme of such quality, reach and excellence over the past 12 months. The strong artistic and financial position we find ourselves in today is a testament to your brilliance and hard work. I firmly believe that the Black Country and its people would be poorer without BCT, and each of you should be proud of the thousands of experiences we help make happen each year right across the region.

TIMOTHY RUSHBY
Chair, Black Country Touring

A Spanner in the Works at Black Country Living Museum

The team at BCT's 25th birthday event

ABOUT US

Black Country Touring (BCT) produces and promotes high-quality theatre, dance and film in the Black Country, putting local communities at the heart of everything we do.

VISION

Our vision is of a Black Country where everyone has the opportunity to experience captivating, inspiring and diverse performances in their community, regardless of age, background or income.

MISSION

We believe the arts have the potential to change lives by allowing us to see new possibilities, develop new skills and provide opportunities to reflect on our own lives, communities and the wider world.

We work with people across the Black Country to select and present the very best available artists and companies to our local communities.

We endeavour to make our work accessible to, and reflective of, the diverse communities that make up the Black Country.

We collaborate with artists and local people to create new work born out of contemporary Black Country stories for both local and national audiences.

The Sleeping Seeds by Fox & Rocha as part of Where We Grow

OUR WORK

All of BCT's work is focused on creating opportunities for local people to experience theatre, dance and film. They are actively involved in programming, promoting and creating performances, events and festivals. We achieve this through two strands:

TOURING

- **Community Promoters:** Supporting local volunteers working in their community to select and promote touring theatre, dance and film in accessible and friendly neighbourhood venues such as community centres and libraries
- **Young Promoters:** Schoolchildren and young people aged from 5 – 18 in mainstream and SEN education transform their school or college into a venue for a touring production, learning the skills required to run a theatre venue
- **Community Cinema:** We support local people and venues to bring an immersive cinema experience to their community. The focus is on bringing people together to enjoy the magic of film, programming everything from sing-alongs to documentaries

PRODUCING

- **Original Productions:** Site-specific theatre productions that reflect the cultural diversity and the lived experiences of Black Country people - their histories, origins, memories, interests, hopes and aspirations
- **Digital projects:** Podcasts and film projects that amplify the voices of Black Country people and shine a light on their stories and lived experiences

YEAR AT A GLANCE: KEY DATA

BCT's commitment to inclusion and engagement has been at the heart of our work throughout 2023-24. We exceeded all of our demographic targets, with over 29.1% of our audience from ethnically diverse backgrounds and 61.9% from the most deprived areas of the Black Country. 23.9% identified as having a disability.

Initiatives such as Pay What You Can ticketing and accessible programming in libraries and community spaces ensure that our work reaches those who might otherwise face barriers to cultural participation.

15,313
Total Audiences

240
Total Events

29.1%
Ethnically Diverse Audience

23.9%
D/deaf and Disabled Audiences

61.9%
of audiences are from the most deprived third of postcodes

£421,000
of investment secured for our work across the Black Country

The Head Gardener by Untied Artists

TOURING & COMMUNITY CINEMA

TOURING HIGHLIGHTS

This year BCT's touring programmes expanded, reaching new audiences across the Black Country with thought-provoking and entertaining performances. As the cost of living crisis deepened, we worked closely with our Community Promoters and partners to ensure the arts remained affordable and accessible to all.

Dangerous Dave by Noisy Oyster

The Toymaker by Infamous Arts

"Absolutely cracking show. Beautifully written, performed, executed and the design had loads of delights and suprises."

Laika the Space Dog by Lori Hopkins

"A great show, very funny and a lovely way to spend an hour during half term. Thanks for the laughs!"

Peter Chand - Storyteller

"Lovely performance! My children loved it and got involved. The educational message was well done. Thank you!"

The Zoo That Comes to You by Scarlet Oak Theatre

Special Delivery by A Bird in the Hand Theatre

REKINDLE LIBRARIES PROJECT

Rekindle, a three-year project funded by Arts Council England and led by Creative Arts East, is a nationwide initiative pairing five arts organisations with their local library services.

As a part of Rekindle, BCT are collaborating with Sandwell Library Service to bring more creativity and culture into five Sandwell Libraries: **Smethwick Library, Central Library, Wednesbury Library, Tipton Library** and **Blackheath Library**. As well as programming more performances and workshops into libraries, we are working with library staff to build their skills and confidence in making exciting events happen in their library.

In 2023-24, Rekindle delivered 10 shows and workshops across multiple libraries, with performances aimed at both adult and family audiences. Key highlights included LGBTQ+ themed shows and family performances during the October half-term.

Library staff have been supported with marketing and event management training, building their capacity to continue programming diverse and engaging cultural events. The project not only brought arts into community spaces but also fostered long-term relationships between libraries and their audiences.

Confetti by Will Jackson

COMMUNITY CINEMA

The Community Cinema project remains crucial in bringing independent and international cinema to local communities. At the beginning of 2023, we entered into a three-year strategic partnership with **Film Hub Midlands** to expand the reach of the project in the Black Country, to establish 4-5 new community cinema groups in the Black Country.

This year, venues such as **Brushstrokes (Smethwick), Wesley Centre (Wednesbury)** and **Rowley Regis Disability Centre** continued to host regular screenings, offering films from diverse cultural perspectives, including Iranian, Japanese, Bhutanese and Ukrainian cinema. Rowley Regis Disability Centre secured additional funding to continue its programme reflecting the growing demand for community-led cinema events. These screenings provided more than just entertainment; they became focal points for community cohesion, offering a space for dialogue and reflection through post-film discussions and Q&A sessions with filmmakers.

We also initiated new community cinema programmes with **Gatis Community Space** and **Beacon Centre for the Blind** in Wolverhampton.

WEDNESBURY DAY

In June 2023, BCT, Multistory, and We Are Wednesbury transformed Wednesbury with two lively Saturdays of Wednesbury Day festivities. Families enjoyed interactive street games by **Autin Dance Theatre**, comedic walkabouts from **Curious Cargo's "Lollipop Ladies"** and **Crow's Nest Theatre**'s heartwarming family show, "Is That a Yeti, Hetty?"

On June 17th, the town centre buzzed with excitement as a 13-foot sea giant puppet led a community parade, concluding in **Autin Dance Theatre's** spectacular **Out of the Deep Blue**. Market Square and High Street came alive with playful puppet shows, mischievous **"Pigeons" by Circii,** and the vibrant beats of the **Rajasthan Heritage Brass Band**.

Wednesbury Day was part of the We Are Wednesbury programme, supported by Sandwell Council and Historic England's High Streets Heritage Action Zones scheme.

Rajasthan Heritage Brass Band & Circus Raj

'The Pigeons' by Circii

'Out of the Deep Blue' by Autin Dance Theatre

SMETHWICK PUPPETRY FESTIVAL

In February 2024, BCT launched the first Smethwick Puppetry Festival, a week-long celebration of puppet theatre. Spread across seven community venues, the festival featured 15 performances, including shows for families and adults, and several participatory workshops. The festival's unique approach combined traditional puppetry with modern themes, such as environmental sustainability, the impact of dementia on families and families and even space exploration, in performances like **SeedHeart, I'm Glad I Asked,** and **Laika the Space Dog.**

One of the festival's key successes was its commitment to accessibility. All events were pay-what-you-can, making the festival affordable for all, with a suggested donation of just £3 per ticket. We also launched our 'access kits' for venues, which feature a variety of tools to make performances more relaxed and enjoyable for all.

In all, over 1,000 people attended shows and many sold out in advance; the festival also garnered significant community support, raising over £1,500 from donations and receiving an additional £4,500 in partner contributions. We are grateful to T**he Players of the People's Postcode Lottery, Arts Council England** and **Sandwell Council**, including **West Smethwick Park Pavillion** and **Sandwell Libraries,** for their support of the programme.

The overwhelmingly positive response from audiences, partners, and promoters makes it likely that this event will become a regular feature of BCT's calendar and reinforces the importance of providing diverse cultural experiences within accessible community settings. Plans are already in place to expand the festival for 2025, ensuring that it becomes a key cultural event that Smethwick can be proud of.

Pixiematosis by the Object Project

"Great having local events and making good use of community spaces, especially during half term!"

"Educational, uplifting and fun! Such a treat for the whole family. Opportunities like this are so very important for all adults and children."

East of the Sun, West of the Moon by The Fetch Theatre

"Pay What You Can was useful due to current job issues and not being sure if we'd make it. We were able to donate on the door."

Insect Safari by The Fetch Theatre

PRODUCTIONS & PROJECTS

WHERE WE GROW

Our production Where We Grow celebrated community gardens and the people who maintain them. This project spanned three months and culminated in four performance days in September 2023, bringing live performances to four community gardens across the Black Country: **Caldmore Community Gardens**, the **Dorothy Parkes Centre plot at Bearwood Allotments**, **Hawbush Gardens** in Brierley Hill, and **Gatis Community Space** in Wolverhampton. The performances explored nature, community, and resilience themes through theatre, poetry, storytelling, and music.

The collaboration between eight local artists, musician Katy Rose Bennett and the communities that inspired them made this project particularly impactful. The artists paired up and spent time in the gardens, gathering stories from volunteers and visitors, and created bespoke performances that were deeply connected to the unique characteristics of each space. Importantly, all performances were BSL-interpreted, ensuring accessibility for D/deaf audiences. With over 670 attendees, the project received glowing feedback, especially from audience members who had not previously engaged with live theatre.

Audience comments such as **"It grounded me today, which I needed"** and **"Absolutely mesmerising"** reflect the emotional and personal resonance of the performances. This project exemplifies BCT's ethos of creating big ideas in small spaces, fostering local pride and connection through the arts.

The process and spaces have informed the development of Wild, BCT's 2024 touring production.

Sam Frankie Fox

"Excellent show. Something for everyone. Lots of local stories and accessibility for those who need it (hearing impaired)"

"Absolutely mesmerising. Every performance was wonderful and made me emotional."

Rochi Rampal

Katy Rose Bennett

"The space, the variety and the subject was perfect. It grounded me today which I needed."

Adrian B. Earle & Sophina Jagot

Bohdan Piasecki

Vimal Korpal & Jack Trow

A SPANNER IN THE WORKS

at Black Country Living Museum

Black Country Touring created a new short production called A Spanner in the Works as part of the Black Country Living Museum's Summer Lates programme in August 2023. It featured 25 performances over 5 Fridays in August and the first week of September. It continues our longstanding partnership with the museum, where we use the incredible historical settings to explore the region's heritage in a way that connects with contemporary audiences.

A Spanner in the Works was based on original research undertaken by Vimal Korpal for Black Country Touring. It was inspired by the stories given to us in interviews with bus drivers and conductors who worked on local buses in the 1960s and by the events of the time, including the Wolverhampton bus drivers' turban dispute, the Enoch Powell rivers of blood speech and West Bromwich Albion winning the FA cup.

Two of the performers - Vimal Korpal and Jack Trow - also had strong personal connections to the subject matter. Vimal's dad moved to the region from Punjab and spent many years driving local buses here, and Jack's grandad worked in the bus garage for West Bromwich Corporation.

Vimal Korpal & Anjeela Wakil

"Well performed, very enjoyable. Brought back memories of the 60s"

"I didn't expect it to be so political. I'm glad it was. Issues need to be addressed. Well presented. Well done."

Amit Persaud & Vimal Korpal

"Thank you for representing my family's history!"

Jack Trow & Vimal Korpal

WHERE ARE YOU?

Schools Tour

Where Are You? was developed in collaboration with **Accra Theatre Workshop** in Ghana, is a hybrid theatre production for families, featuring a mix of live performance, pre-recorded performance and animation. It tells the story of two penpals, Rochi in Bearwood (UK) and Abena in Dzorwulu (Ghana), who embark on a perilous journey across land, mountains and sea, courting danger and adventure in order to meet each other in the middle.

Where Are You? was originally presented by the **Birmingham 2022 Festival**, and debuted in June 2022 at Bear Bookshop in Bearwood and J-CLU School of Arts in Accra, Ghana as a part of our **What's In Store** project.

From November to December 2023, the production toured to five schools across Sandwell, Dudley, Wolverhampton and Walsall. Each school in the UK was paired with a school or children's centre in Accra, Ghana, with the performances taking place simultaneously at both locations, connected via a live stream.

480 children across both countries attended the show and had the opportunity to learn about each other's country and culture.

Where Are You? at Penn Hall School, Wolverhampton

Where Are You? at Oakham Primary School, Oldbury

"'Where Are You?' was such a unique piece of work. The children seemed to love all elements. The way they talked about the story book alone; the animated gasps when elements of that story burst into life on screen in front of them in their own school hall; their fizzy-pop excitement when they got to meet and talk with children they'd never met before, thousands of miles away on another continent - that was all brilliant and a privilege to be a part of!"

— Rochi Rampal, performer

DIGITAL DEVELOPMENTS

BCT continued its journey into creating immersive and inclusive digital media this year, particularly through the Blathering with SVI Podcast and the Sanctuary in Sandwell short films.

These projects were released in Spring/ Summer 2024, with much of the development in this financial year.

BLATHERING WITH SVI

This podcast series, a collaboration with Sandwell Visually Impaired (SVI) and artist Graeme Rose, delves into topics relevant to the visually impaired community, exploring their daily experiences - the highs and the lows - in their own words. Over several months, SVI members discussed everyday subjects with Graeme Rose, reflecting on how vision impacts their perception of colour, dreams, and water. How does sight loss reshape these relationships? What if you've never seen at all?

These conversations are captured in three engaging episodes, each enriched with an evocative soundscape by Think/Write/Fly (Adrian B. Earle).

Listen via the QR code below:

SANCTUARY IN SANDWELL

Black Country Touring, Bearwood Community Hub, and Borough of Sanctuary Sandwell have created four short films to counter negative migration narratives and inspire empathy by sharing real stories from sanctuary seekers who've made Sandwell their home.

The films feature Forward Poetry Prize-winner Bohdan Piasecki as he talks with four locals—Sozan, Jose, Ali, and Lazo—about their journeys to the UK. Within 24 hours, Bohdan crafts and performs a poem inspired by each story.

The project resulted in four powerful films and poems. Thanks to The Space for their support.

Watch via the QR code below:

LOOKING FORWARD

The future holds exciting opportunities for BCT. With the successful launch of new projects like the Smethwick Puppetry Festival, the ongoing success of our productions, and expanding partnerships in the digital sphere, we are poised to continue making a meaningful impact in 2024 and beyond. We will remain focused on ensuring the arts are accessible, inclusive, and relevant to all communities in the Black Country.

WILD

Sprouting from Where We Grow is **Wild** - a new theatre production celebrating what Wild means to us: in the natural world, in our cities and within ourselves. With an ensemble cast, community choir, rich soundscapes and live music it invites the audience to reflect on their own definitions of 'wild', fostering a deeper appreciation of both nature and human nature.

Following a deep engagement period with community gardens and groups, the show toured the Black Country in October 2024.

THE SLEEPING SEEDS

Another development from Where We Grow is **The Sleeping Seeds** by Smethwick-based artists **Fox & Rocha**.

Originally devised as a family friendly, 15 minute musical performance as part of our Summer production, in 2024 it was expanded into a full touring production courtesy of the artists and Curiosity Productions, with support from BCT and Director Steve Johnstone.

SMETHWICK ARTS

In 2024, BCT will work with a consortium of 10 community venues and local arts organisations **The Parakeet** and **Spectra** to pilot a pioneering new approach to collective arts programming.

Based on the idea of devolving an arts centre offer across multiple venues in a town, it will expand and amplify arts programming across Smethwick, encourage people to travel to venues they've not been to before and deliver a well-rounded, accessible and intensive programme of performances, workshops,, creative stay and play for families and opportunities to be creative.

TRUSTEES & TEAM

TRUSTEES

Timothy Rushby	Chair
Imtiaz Dungarwalla	Vice Chair
Akila McLean	
Anna Webster	
Carla Priddon	
Emma Worrall	
Julie McKirdy	
Michelle Bould	
Rachael Magson	
Rupinder Sandhu	

BLACK COUNTRY TOURING TEAM

Frances Land	Co-Artistic Director
Steve Johnstone	Co-Artistic Director
Matt Andrews	Development Director
Corinne Morris	General Manager
Natalie Kidman	Promoter Manager
Sampira Al-Fihri	Creative Producer
Amrit Kaur Juss	Marketing & Communications Coordinator
Donna Clarkson	Community Programme Coordinator
Laura Leech	Administration & Projects Assistant
Olivia James	Community Cinema Coordinator (Freelance)
Suki Sohi	Community Cinema Coordinator (joined June 2024)

FUNDERS & SUPPORTERS

Black Country Touring relies on the dedication of our local volunteers and venues. Without their endless enthusiasm for their communities and the arts, our work would not be possible. We are also grateful to all of the individual donors who have supported our work this year.

Supported using public funding by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

PEOPLE'S POSTCODE LOTTERY

POSTCODE CULTURE TRUST

Esmée Fairbairn FOUNDATION

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL

RURAL TOURING DANCE INITIATIVE

the space

Film Hub Midlands

BFI FAN BFI FILM AUDIENCE NETWORK

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY

BLACK COUNTRY LIVING MUSEUM

multi story

BIRMINGHAM 2022 FESTIVAL commonwealth games

BRITISH COUNCIL

Black Country Touring
c/o Thimblemill Library
Thimblemill Road
Smethwick
West Midlands
B67 5RJ

Charity No: 1080608
Company No: 3446320

Black Country Touring is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

BLACK COUNTRY TOURING

www.bctouring.org.uk

Company registration number: 3446320

Charity registration number: 1080608

Black Country Touring

(A company limited by guarantee)

Annual Report and Financial Statements

for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

Bissell & Brown Birmingham Limited
12 Portman Rd, Kings Heath
Birmingham
B13 0SL

Black Country Touring

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Black Country Touring

Trustees' Report

The trustees, who are directors for the purposes of company law, present the annual report together with the financial statements of the charitable company for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Structure, governance and management

Nature of governing document

The company is limited by guarantee and does not have a share capital. It is governed by Memorandum and Articles of Association and was incorporated on 8th October 1997. It was registered as a Charity on 8th May 2000.

Organisational structure

Chief Executives & Co-Artistic directors : Steve Johnstone & Frances Johnstone
Company Secretary: Frances Johnstone
Development Director: Matthew Andrews
General Manager: Corinne Morris
Promotion Manager: Natalie Kidman
Creative Producer: Sampira Al-Fihri
Marketing Co-ordinator: Amrit Kaur Juss
Community Programme Coordinators: Donna Clarkson, Suki Sohi
Administrator: Laura Leech

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

Recruitment and Appointment of New Trustees
1 Members of the Committee will be invited on the basis of their working expertise and experience, and/or their background and other experiences and skills. The committee as a whole will aim to reflect the broad make-up and cultural diversity of the Black Country and the West Midlands.

2 As a general rule, there should be a relationship between the Company and a person proposed for Committee membership. The person proposed should know something of Black Country Touring's work. This criterion does not apply to people offering specific skills.

3 The time limits for membership laid down in the constitution should be applied consciously, rather than renewing automatically.

4 There should be a provision for new members to be brought on for a fixed term of one or two years in the first instance, with the possibility of extension to full membership, after review. (Co-options for specific projects or developments are already laid down in the constitution)

In applying these criteria Black Country Touring will take a pro-active approach in fully operating its policy of equal opportunities.

Induction and training of trustees

All proposed new members must be provided with an induction pack and have a formal discussion with a member of the Company's staff, before their final approval by the Committee.

These guidelines run alongside the terms of Black Country Touring's Articles of Association.

Black Country Touring

Trustees' Report

Objectives and activities

Public benefit

In the exercise of their powers as charity trustees, they have had due regard to the published guidance from the Charity Commission on the operation of the public benefit requirement, and the aims of the charity are carried out for the public benefit.

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the requirements of section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

Objects and aims

The objects of the Company are to promote, maintain, improve and advance the education of the public by the encouragement and practice of the arts, by fostering and promoting for the benefit of the public the improvement and development of artistic knowledge, taste, understanding, and application of the arts and in particular but not exclusively, to provide arts based activities and encourage participation by all sections of the community in such activities in the Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley and Sandwell Metropolitan Boroughs and their environs.

Trustees and officers

The trustees and officers serving during the year and since the year end were as follows:

Trustees:	Timothy Rushby
	Imtiaz Dungarwalla
	Carla Priddon
	Julie McKirdy
	Akila Mclean
	Rachael Magson (appointed 18 April 2023)
	Rupinder Sandhu (appointed 10 April 2023)
	Michelle Bould (appointed 10 October 2023)
	Anna Webster (appointed 10 October 2023)
	Emma Worrall (appointed 10 October 2023)
	Paul Reece (Resigned 1 June 2023)

Achievements and performance

Please refer to the attached Annual Review for 2023/2024

Financial review

Please refer to the attached Annual Review for 2023/2024

Black Country Touring

Trustees' Report

Policy on reserves

The income and expenditure of the charity fluctuates according to the pattern of grant and project income secured. As the Charity employs a number of staff, the Management Committee (Trustees) consider that reserves are needed to provide for an orderly wind-down in the event of an unexpected reduction in the funds secured. The Charity is also required on occasion to incur the costs of developing and researching work before the grants which have been awarded, and other income, are actually received. The Charity therefore needs a level of reserves for cash flow reasons. In the opinion of the Management Committee the reserves of the Charity are appropriate for its scale of operation.

Reference and Administrative Details

Charity Registration Number:	1080608
Company Registration Number:	3446320
	The charity is incorporated in England and Wales.
Registered Office:	Thimblemill Library Thimblemill Rd Smethwick B67 5RJ
Principal Office:	Thimblemill Library Thimblemill Rd Smethwick B67 5RJ
Independent Examiner:	Bissell & Brown Birmingham Limited 12 Portman Rd, Kings Heath Birmingham B13 0SL
Bankers:	The Co-operative Bank

The annual report was approved by the trustees of the charity on 12/11/24 and signed on its behalf by:

Timothy Rushby
Trustee

Black Country Touring

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees (who are also the directors of Black Country Touring for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland".

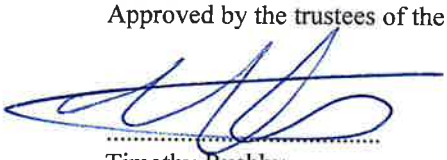
Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards, comprising FRS 102 have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that can disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are 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 are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Approved by the trustees of the charity on 12/11/24 and signed on its behalf by:



Timothy Rushby
Trustee

Black Country Touring

Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of Black Country Touring ('the Company')

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the Company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of Bissell & Brown Birmingham Ltd, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of Black Country Touring as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act 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
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities [applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)].

I have no concerns and 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.

.....

B J Matthews, FCA
Bissell & Brown Birmingham Ltd
12 Portman Rd, Kings Heath
Birmingham
B13 0SL

12 November 2024

Black Country Touring

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Income and Endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	2	659	-	659	196
Charitable activities	15	474,163	75,000	549,163	474,366
Other income		754	-	754	146
Total Income		475,576	75,000	550,576	474,708
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	13	(452,627)	(103,634)	(556,261)	(474,059)
Total Expenditure		(452,627)	(103,634)	(556,261)	(474,059)
Net income/(expenditure)		22,949	(28,634)	(5,685)	649
Net movement in funds		22,949	(28,634)	(5,685)	649
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		92,806	98,634	191,440	190,790
Total funds carried forward	9	115,755	70,000	185,755	191,439

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

Black Country Touring

(Registration number: 3446320)
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024

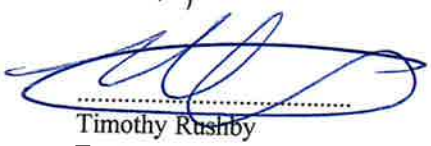
	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	4	-	882
Current assets			
Debtors	5	16,651	21,391
Cash at bank and in hand	6	176,319	175,307
		192,970	196,698
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	7	(7,215)	(6,141)
Net current assets		185,755	190,557
Net assets		185,755	191,439
Funds of the charity:			
Restricted income funds			
Restricted funds	9	70,000	98,634
Unrestricted income funds			
Unrestricted funds		115,755	92,805
Total funds	9	185,755	191,439

For the financial year ending 31 March 2024 the charity was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the charity to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476; and
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

The financial statements on pages 8 to 13 were approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue on 12/11/24 and signed on their behalf by:



.....

Timothy Rushby
Trustee

1 Accounting policies

Summary of significant accounting policies and key accounting estimates

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

Statement of compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with 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)) (issued in October 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Basis of preparation

Black Country Touring meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

Going concern

The Trustees have considered budgets and cash flow forecasts through to November 2025, and the level of post year-end support received from Arts Council England. On this basis, the trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern nor any significant areas of uncertainty that affect the carrying value of assets held by the charity.

Income and endowments

All income is recognised once the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of the income receivable can be measured reliably.

Donations and legacies

Donations are recognised when the charity has been notified in writing of both the amount and settlement date. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance by the charity before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that these conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Expenditure

All expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to that expenditure, it is probable settlement is required and the amount can be measured reliably. All costs are allocated to the applicable expenditure heading that aggregate similar costs to that category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of resources, with central staff costs allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use. Other support costs are allocated based on the spread of staff costs.

Charitable activities

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Taxation

The charity is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

Tangible fixed assets

Individual fixed assets costing £500.00 or more are initially recorded at cost, less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation is provided on tangible fixed assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value, over their expected useful economic life as follows:

Asset class	Depreciation method and rate
Equipment	33.33% straight-line

Fund structure

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees' discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Restricted income funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

2 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Donations and legacies;			
Donations from individuals	259	259	196
Trusts and foundations	400	400	-
	659	659	196

	Note	Total 2024 £

4 Tangible fixed assets

	Furniture and equipment £	Total £
Cost		
At 1 April 2023	24,105	24,105
At 31 March 2024	24,105	24,105
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2023	23,223	23,223
Charge for the year	882	882
At 31 March 2024	24,105	24,105
Net book value		
At 31 March 2024	-	-
At 31 March 2023	882	882

5 Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	16,651	13,391
Other debtors	-	8,000
	16,651	21,391

6 Cash and cash equivalents

	2024 £	2023 £
Cash at bank	176,319	175,307

7 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Other taxation and social security	5,515	4,441
Accruals	1,700	1,700
	7,215	6,141

8 Charity status

The charity is limited by guarantee, incorporated in England and Wales, and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the trustees is liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the charity in the event of liquidation.

The principal place of business is:
Thimblemill Library
Thimblemill Rd
Smethwick
B67 5RJ

9 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Unrestricted funds					
General					
General unrestricted	77,633	475,576	(452,626)	(4,828)	95,755
Designated					
Development reserve	15,172	-	-	(15,172)	-
Arts Council NPO Projects	-	-	-	20,000	20,000
	15,172	-	-	4,828	20,000
Total unrestricted funds	92,805	475,576	(452,626)	-	115,755
Restricted funds					
Esmee Fairbairn	30,134	-	(30,134)	-	-
D'Oyly Carte	3,500	-	(3,500)	-	-
Saintbury	3,000	-	(3,000)	-	-
The Postcode Lottery	62,000	75,000	(67,000)	-	70,000
Total restricted funds	98,634	75,000	(103,634)	-	70,000
Total funds	191,439	550,576	(556,260)	-	185,755

10 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net (outgoing)/incoming resources for the year include:

	2024 £

11 Staff costs

The monthly average number of persons (including senior management / leadership team) employed by the charity during the year expressed as full time equivalents was as follows:

	2024 No	2023 No
Staff	9	8

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year.

12 Trustees remuneration and expenses

No trustees, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year.

No trustees have received any reimbursed expenses from the charity during the year.

13 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £	2024 £ Total 2023 £
Black Country Cinema cost	20,349	3,300	23,649	29,488
Productions & performances	97,867	54,200	152,067	115,729
Artistic directors	48,252	-	48,252	45,317
Marketing & publicity	15,194	-	15,194	7,863
Travelling & subsistence	2,979	-	2,979	1,956
Salaries & employers NI & pension	196,092	46,134	242,226	169,804
Doubtful debts	12,976	-	12,976	-
Training	3,886	-	3,886	3,149
Insurance	1,162	-	1,162	1,763
Rent	9,000	-	9,000	7,042
Computer/ network	784	-	784	2,309

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Printing, postage & stationery	-	-	-	2,030
Shows & performances	19,701	-	19,701	73,832
Telephone	-	-	-	300
Independent examination	1,700	-	1,700	1,766
Subscriptions	2,103	-	2,103	2,174
Equipment & replacements	10,760	-	10,760	-
Other costs	8,855	-	8,855	7,238
Bank charges	85	-	85	67
Removal costs	-	-	-	1,791
Depreciation	882	-	882	441
	452,627	103,634	556,261	474,059

14 Taxation

The charity is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation.

15 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Arts Council core grant	307,225	-	307,225	146,137
Local authorities project income	24,224	-	24,224	26,332
Programme projects and production income	20,057	-	20,057	-
Fees and shows	99,709	-	99,709	143,002
BFI - Black Country Community Cinema	-	-	-	26,902
Esmee Fairbairn	-	-	-	44,000
Post Code Lottery	-	75,000	75,000	75,000
Black Country Living Museum	22,948	-	22,948	-
Saintbury Trust	-	-	-	3,000
D'oyly Carte	-	-	-	3,500
Other income	-	-	-	1,093
A & H Pilkington	-	-	-	1,000
The Feeney Trust	-	-	-	4,400
	474,163	75,000	549,163	474,366

BLACK COUNTRY TOURING

England & Wales - Charity number 1080608

Accounts

ANNUAL REPORT

& FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2022/23

BLACK COUNTRY TOURING

Funders & Supporters

Many thanks to our 2022/23 funders and partners:

Supported using public funding by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Supported by players of PEOPLE'S POSTCODE LOTTERY

Awarded funds from POSTCODE CULTURE TRUST

Esmée Fairbairn FOUNDATION

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL

BIRMINGHAM 2022 FESTIVAL commonwealth games

BRITISH COUNCIL

Film Hub Midlands

BFI FAN BFI FILM AUDIENCE NETWORK

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY

SCVO connecting · enabling · transforming

BLACK COUNTRY LIVING MUSEUM

JF JOHN FEENEY CHARITABLE TRUST

DCT The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust

The Austin and Hope Pilkington Trust

What's in Store Wednesbury was part of We Are Wednesbury, a cultural programme produced by Multistory for the High Streets Heritage Action Zone initiative, funded by Sandwell Council and Historic England.

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

HERITAGE FUND

multi story

HM Government

Funded by Historic England

Supported by Unity Theatre Trust

About Us

Black Country Touring (BCT) produces and promotes high-quality theatre, dance and film in the Black Country, putting local communities at the heart of everything we do.

Vision

Our vision is of a Black Country where everyone has the opportunity to experience captivating, inspiring and diverse performances in their community, regardless of their background, age or income.

Mission

We believe the arts have the potential to change lives by allowing us to see new possibilities, develop new skills and provide opportunities to reflect on our own lives, communities and the wider world.

We work with people across the Black Country to select and present the very best available artists and companies to our local communities.

We endeavour to make our work accessible to, and reflective of, the diverse communities that make up the Black Country.

We collaborate with artists and local people to create new work born out of contemporary Black Country stories for both local and national audiences.

Curious Cargo perform at What's In Store Bearwood

Our Work

All of BCT's work is focused on creating opportunities for local people to experience theatre, dance and film. They are actively involved in programming, promoting and creating performances, events and festivals. We achieve this through four strands:

- **Community Promoters**: Supporting local volunteers working in their community to select and promote touring theatre, dance and film in accessible and friendly neighbourhood venues such as community centres and libraries

- **Young Promoters:** Schoolchildren and young people aged from 5 – 18 in mainstream and SEN education transform their school or college into a venue for a touring production, learning the skills required to run a theatre venue

- **Original Productions:** Site-specific theatre productions that reflect the cultural diversity and the lived experiences of Black Country people - their histories, origins, memories, interests, hopes and aspirations

- **Community Cinema:** We support local people and venues to bring an immersive cinema experience to their community. The focus is on bringing people together to enjoy the magic of film, programming everything from sing-alongs to documentaries

Rupinder Kaur performs in Al-Raqib Modest Fashion in What's in Store Bearwood. Photo by Anand Chhabra.

Chair's Statement

Rekindling Performing Arts in the Black Country

Dear Friends and Supporters,

I am delighted to present this Chair's Statement for our Annual Report, reflecting on the remarkable strides our organisation has made during the 2022/23 year. This period has witnessed transformative change, continued resilience and new collaborations.

Reconnecting Communities Through Culture

The past year was exceptional for Black Country Touring as we observed the enthusiasm of our audiences across the wider Black Country in returning to events following the pandemic. After a period of isolation, these opportunities to come together in welcoming community spaces felt particularly special and essential, significantly contributing to our collective well-being and sense of togetherness.

The role of culture in connecting communities and reducing isolation cannot be overstated. We swiftly transitioned from the challenges posed by the pandemic to addressing the economic difficulties faced by our communities due to the rising cost of living. Our mission was clear: to ensure that residents across the Black Country could still afford to enjoy outstanding theatre, dance, and film experiences in their neighbourhoods.

A community cinema screening at the Wesley Centre for All in Wednesbury

Breaking Down Barriers

Much of our work centres on challenging and removing barriers and welcoming people into new places, ideas, and experiences. The primary hurdle is often the belief that "it's not for me". In the Black Country, many individuals lack access to arts and culture due to profound inequalities in arts provision across all age groups.

We firmly believe that everyone in the Black Country should have the opportunity to experience the arts, regardless of income, education, or background. This year, much of our site-specific work was focused on taking performances into everyday spaces to engage people where they live, work and shop. Art should be part of the fabric of our lives, something unexpected, happened-upon and exciting, not always confined to a venue with the expectation that the audience will travel for it.

What's in Store Wednesbury. Photo by Philip Parnell.

Enriching Our High Streets

In the heart of the Black Country, we animated high streets and town centres with captivating storytelling, poetry, and performances. What's In Store breathed life into these areas, celebrating the unique stories of local shops, their proprietors, and customers, all crafted in collaboration with local artists. The streets resonated with the sounds of the Rajasthan Heritage Brass Band, and families delighted in the wordless adventures of a Yeti, staged inside Bearwood Indoor Market.

We were proud to present **What's In Store Bearwood** as part of the **Birmingham 2022 Festival**, enriching the cultural tapestry of Sandwell during the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. **What's In Store Wednesbury,** delivered as part of a three-year partnership with Multistory, was another milestone in our commitment to promoting community engagement and cultural diversity throughout the region. Although both towns are within the same borough, they have very different and distinctive identities and environments, so the project was adapted to suit each locale.

Pushing Artistic Boundaries

We furthered the bold experimentation that defined the company's work throughout the pandemic. We embraced the lessons learned during this time, where our company continued to connect with audiences and create immersive and accessible performances. Collaborating with Ghana's Accra Theatre Workshop, we produced **Where Are You?**, a live theatre production for families simultaneously staged in the Black Country and Accra, connected through a live Zoom link.

This endeavour pushed the boundaries of our work within physical spaces and celebrated the power of technology to bridge geographical divides. I particularly enjoyed seeing children from different continents connect through theatre, greeting one another from over 3,000 miles away. The project was made possible thanks to support from the British Council and Birmingham 2022 Festival.

Chair's Statement

Circus Bezerkus at Friar Park Millennium Centre, Sandwell

Rebuilding with Communities

In 2022/23, providing ongoing support and subsidy to our Community Promoters in the Black Country was a top priority. We minimised the risks our Promoters faced during these challenging times by providing additional subsidies and support for their events, thanks to generous financial support from **Arts Council England**, **Esmée Fairbairn Foundation**, **Postcode Culture Trust, British Council** and many more. We are hugely grateful to our funders for the flexibility they have allowed us as we rebuilt our programme, which allowed us to meet the needs of our communities, partners and promoters as we navigated difficult times.

A Sustainable Future

Our focus this year was on laying the groundwork for a sustainable future. The challenges of sustaining our levels of activity in the Black Country have been apparent for years, with little increase in our core funding from Arts Council England in over a decade. Fortuitously, we have received support from local authorities, trusts, and individuals, which significantly boosted our capacity in recent years. However, we recognised that substantial, long-term investment was needed at the core of our organisation to achieve true sustainability and fulfil our potential for impact.

In November, we received the welcome news that **Arts Council England** would increase our annual funding by 51% from 2023 to 2026. This increase will allow us to reach more people than ever in the Black Country, bringing outstanding performances to people's doorsteps and engaging individuals in areas with limited access to the arts. We were delighted to see a vital increase in funding across the Black Country, with a number of brilliant organisations receiving increases or joining the portfolio.

Securing grants of this scale was only possible with the continued financial support of **Sandwell Council** and **Wolverhampton City Council**. Their funding enables us to leverage significantly more income into the boroughs, resulting in a substantial return on investment for the Black Country's communities, venues, and artists.

Enhancing Arts Provision in Libraries

We were delighted to learn that **Rekindle**, a national project to enhance arts provision in libraries, had secured funding for three years from 2023 to 2026 from Arts Council England. Our partnership with Sandwell Libraries will create a culturally relevant, accessible, and inclusive arts programme across five libraries, with training provided to library staff, making these libraries even greater cultural hubs for their local communities.

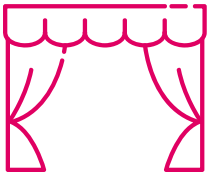
As we look back on this year of challenges, ambition, and new ways of working, we take pride in the dedication of our Community Promoters, volunteers, and venues in the Black Country. They have proven to be resilient in the face of adversity and passionate and excited about bringing outstanding performances back to Black Country audiences. Together, we understand that the arts have the power to unite and enrich our community, and we continue to strive for a brighter and more culturally vibrant Black Country.

Timothy Rushby
Chair, Black Country Touring

Is That a Yeti Hetty? by Crow's Nest Theatre at What's in Store Wednesbury

2022/23 In Stats

35,249 people attended events, performances and productions supported, or produced, by Black Country Touring. This is over double our audience for 2021/22!

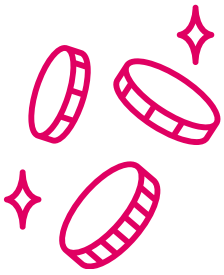


Community & Young Promoters featured **92 performances** of **36** individual touring productions or acts, in **35** venues across the Black Country. This is a **26%** increase in performances on last year.

What's in Store took place in two towns in Sandwell, featured **32** artists, **10** performances and was attended by **5,923** people in total.

1,199 people attended **Community Cinema** screenings A **116%** increase on last year.

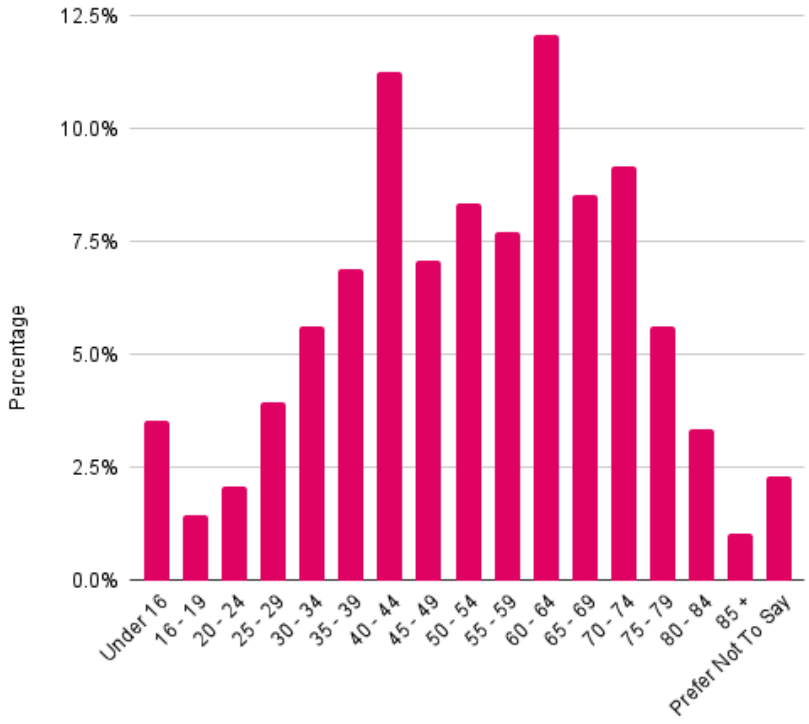
730 people engaged with our digital projects, including the ***Black Country Stories*** **podcast** and short films for **What's In Store** and **Where Are You?**



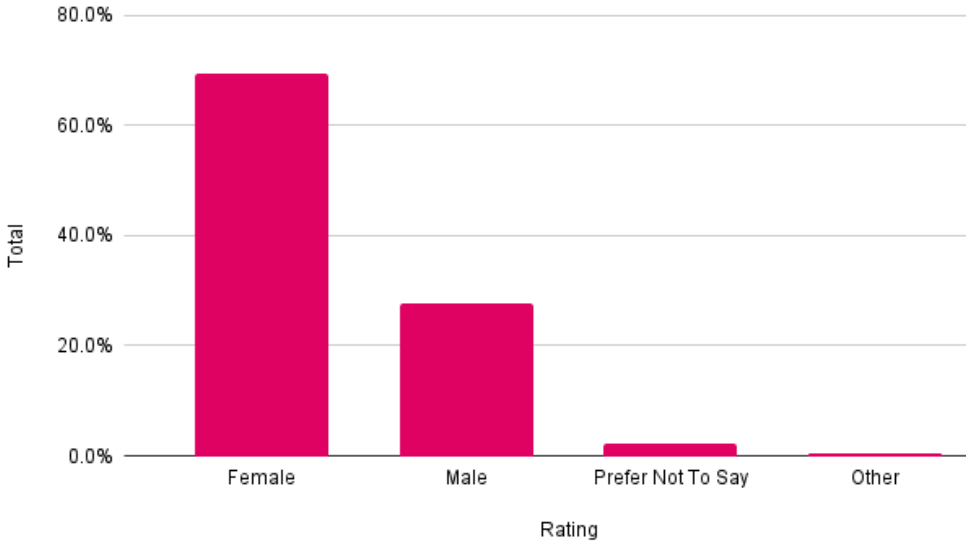
For every £1 granted to Black Country Touring by Arts Council England, Sandwell Council & Wolverhampton Arts & Heritage, **we raised a further £1.83** to invest in the performing arts across the Black Country.

2022/23
Our audiences

Age Range



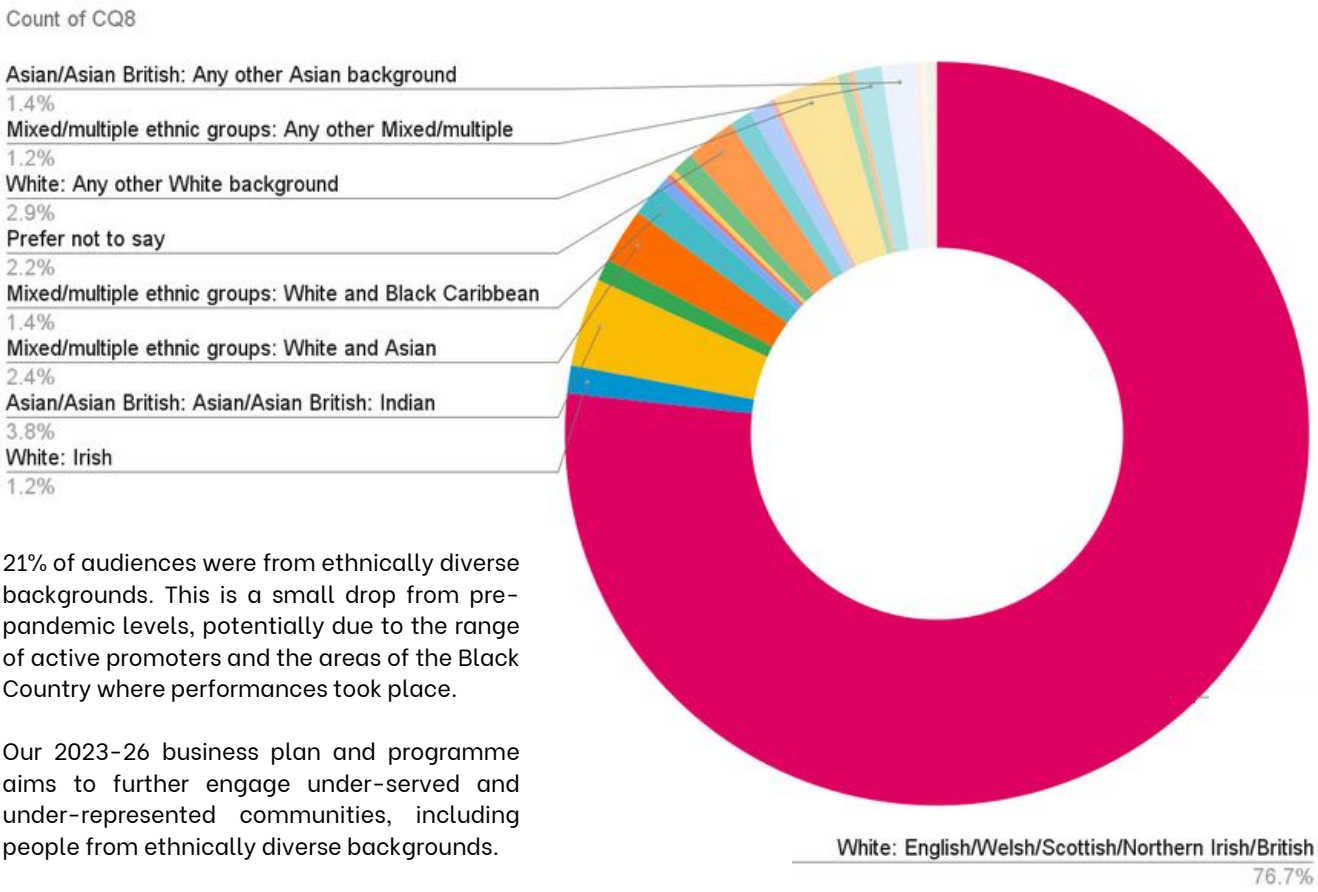
Gender



20% of our audience identified as having their daily activities limited by a disability.

Data is taken from audience surveys conducted between April 2022 and March 2023.

2022/23
Our audiences



21% of audiences were from ethnically diverse backgrounds. This is a small drop from pre-pandemic levels, potentially due to the range of active promoters and the areas of the Black Country where performances took place.

Our 2023-26 business plan and programme aims to further engage under-served and under-represented communities, including people from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

62.3% of Black Country Touring's audiences live in the 30% most deprived areas in the UK, based on postcode data. Many have been hit hard by Covid-19 and the cost of living crisis, which is why we are providing additional support to promoters, keeping ticket prices low and trialling pay-what-you-can ticketing.

60% of our audiences travelled less than 2 miles to attend an event. 82% of our audience travel less than 5 miles, demonstrating the localised focus and impact of our work, in an area with few dedicated arts venues.

2022/23
Our audiences

90% of audiences rated the performance they attended as Very Good, 9% as Good and 0% as poor.

91% of audiences rated the performance they attended as Very Good value for money.

Pleasant evening out, joyful & thought provoking subject matter

It was a wonderful show, I haven't laughed that much in years. well done, excellent!!

It was so original and funny. Something very different, loved it

It's an important event bringing people together. The years of the pandemic have been awful and we need more events like this please.

This event has been perfect for us. As a big family (8) we struggle to find events in our price range and that will be appropriate for all the children's ages. We will definitely be looking for more.

I loved the creativity. The sets were beautiful. My youngest gasped when the big book was opened. It's brilliant to have something like this on our doorstep, very accessible.

It was a magical experience with my close & extended family and made me feel connected to this community. The fact it took place in a library felt like the books came alive!

A chance to really see in a new way, my local high street. Thank you!

Great for lifting people's spirits, community building, educational, fun and imaginative.

Audience data is based on 514 audience surveys and 597 postcodes collected between April 2022 and March 2023

2022/23 Highlights

WHAT'S IN STORE

The Rajasthan Heritage Brass Band perform in Bearwood Indoor Market as a part of What's In Store Bearwood.

Lorna Meehan performs in Allsorts as a part of What's In Store Wednesbury.

2
towns

4
days

46%
of commissioning fees were paid to artists from ethnically diverse backgrounds

32
artists

19
micro-productions

47.5%
of audiences were from the lowest 3 deciles for multiple deprivation (32% in Bearwood, 69% in Wednesbury)

110
performances

5805
people attended

Celebrating Our High Streets

What's In Store has seen Black Country Touring develop a unique approach to presenting performances in town centres and on high streets; invigorating, animating and celebrating the independent spirit of shops, cafes and businesses in Bearwood and Wednesbury. It built on developmental projects in West Bromwich and Wolverhampton in 2019 piloting the work in partnership with the local Business Improvement Districts. The project embodied the organisation's ethos of *Big Ideas in Small Spaces* - presenting high-quality and accessible work, with emotional depth and rich storytelling in everyday but unexpected spaces where audiences don't expect to find theatre, poetry and live music.

What's In Store celebrated the positive impact multiculturalism has on our high streets - the vibrancy of culture and cuisine from around the world and the stories of the people that have settled in Black Country towns; shaping the sights, smells and signage of these bustling thoroughfares. At a time when society often feels fragmented and divided, it's more important than ever that we encourage local people to step over thresholds that they usually pass by, to hear the stories of the people within and walk away with new, positive perspectives of the people and places where they live.

A chance to really see, in a new way, my local high street. Thank you!

Great for lifting people's spirits, community bulding, educative, fun and imaginative.

Brilliantly presented, fun & funny. Great combination of story & music and a window into people's lives & local shopkeepers you'd never be aware of otherwise.

Great event! So lovely to see live & local theatre & poetry in such a different space!

What's In Store Bearwood

17 & 18 June 2022

What's In Store brought two days of live poetry, music and theatre performances to independent shops and cafes along Bearwood Road, Smethwick. Part of the **Birmingham 2022 Festival**, it helped to bolster Sandwell's representation within the festivities and spotlight its rich cultural diversity. The high street is reflective of the many communities that have settled in the area, with cuisine, culture and groceries from Brazil, Mexico, India, the Caribbean and many more.

The project was made possible with funding from the **Esmée Fairbairn Foundation's Reinvent Performing Arts Fund**, which allowed BCT to invest greater resources into a production than ever before and unprecedented creative freedom and capacity to develop the project at a hugely challenging time, as we emerged from the disruption of Covid-19.

> ***It made me realise how important it is to write about lived local experiences and lives. Storytelling is a very powerful medium and sometimes we do overlook it.***
>
> *- Artist feedback*

20 freelance artists were employed in total, the majority of whom are residents of Sandwell and the wider West Midlands. At the heart of the project were a team of 7 local artists who were in residence in shops along the high street. They developed new performances based on stories gathered from business owners and customers and inspired by the Bearwood Road. Examples include **Auden Allen,** who celebrated the crackle of vinyl in RPM Audio, while **Rupinder Kaur's The Never Ending Journey** was inspired by the clothing store Ar-Raqib Modest Fashion and the story of its owner. **Bohdan Piasecki's The Shop of Poems** popped up Bearwood Indoor Market in the run-up to What's In Store and saw Bohdan write and perform poems based on stories gathered from local people who visited.

There were two special shows for children and families - BCT's original production **Where Are You?** at Bear Bookshop, and **Is That A Yeti, Hetty? by Crow's Nest Theatre** in Bearwood Indoor Market. Poet **Dreadlockalien** created freestyle poems together with members of the public, while **Jake Oldershaw** performed **Coffee & Tea**, a warm-hearted performance inspired by tales from Black Country cafés that finds the extraordinary in the everyday. High street spaces came to life with **Curious Cargo's** mischievous **Lollipop Ladies** and the incredible **Rajasthan Heritage Brass Band**.

Where Are You?

17 & 18 June 2022, presented as part of What's In Store Bearwood

Where Are You? is a hybrid theatre production for families produced by Black Country Touring in collaboration with **Accra Theatre Workshop** in Ghana, commissioned by **Birmingham 2022 Festival** and funded by the **British Council**. It tells the story of two penpals, Rochi in Bearwood and Abena in Dzorwulu, who embark on a perilous journey courting danger and adventure in order to meet each other in the middle.

> ***Because of COVID, we couldn't travel and be in the same place, but to have the opportunity to explore a new way of working was really what we needed at the time.***
>
> Emelia Asiedu, Artistic Director - Accra Theatre Workshop

The creative team crossed both locations and never met in person, collaborating entirely over Zoom and Whatsapp. The show, featuring a mix of live performance, pre-recorded performance and animation, was staged simultaneously in Bear Bookshop (Bearwood) and J-CLU School of Arts (Accra) and was connected through a live stream. It was accompanied by a beautifully illustrated children's book and a standalone film.

> ***A wonderful feelgood show with an excellent use of digital technology. Made me feel more connected to my community and people in Ghana. Brilliant to take place in a local bookshop.***
>
> Audience member

What's In Store Wednesbury

23 & 24 September 2022

12 artists & performers

8 micro-productions

56 individual performances

9 participating shops

2,605 people attended

Black Country Touring were commissioned by fellow Sandwell arts charity **Multistory** to produce a version of What's in Store bespoke to Wednesbury, as part of **We Are Wednesbury**, a three year programme of cultural activity in Wednesbury led by Multistory for the **Wednesbury Heritage Action Zone**. The aim of **We Are Wednesbury** is to enable local people to express the pride they feel for their town, celebrate the role and importance of the high street as a hub of the community and enable people to understand the history of their town and share their memories and stories.

The project was built on the learnings of the Bearwood iteration and responded to the unique identity of Wednesbury town centre and its communities. The We Are Wednesbury steering group were engaged throughout the project and the programme was tailored towards families and people with limited opportunity to engage with the arts. New market stalls in the heart of the town were transformed into performance spaces, welcoming passers-by with **Is That a Yeti, Hetty by Crow's Nest Theatre,** stilt performers **Top Bananas** and a stall hosted by Wednesbury Poet Laureate **Brendan Hawthorne**.

Actor **Vimal Korpal** and musician **Derek Nisbet** led audiences on a journey to some of the fantastic independent businesses throughout the town, uncovering their stories and giving a new insight into the people at the heart of the local community. **Lorna Meehan** wove stories of her crafty past with that of the Allsorts wool shop and its loyal customers, giving insight into what makes it an integral part of the Wednesbury community and how important it is to let the world see what you've made. Poet and actor **Suzan Spence** welcomed audience into Mama L's coffee shop, with tales of an often overlooked gem on the high street.

Wonderful to have activities in [the] town centre for everyone.

Good quality theatre in the heart of the community. Bringing people to participate in the arts in the heart of the community is important connecting people and place.

Interesting to find out who the people are behind the shops. It was nice to hear their stories.

This event is so beautiful, it meant a lot to me since I was able to learn more about Wednesbury and had a lot of fun.

Smethwick Celebrates The Queen's Jubilee

A New Creative Consortium for Smethwick

In Spring 2022, a consortium of four venues in Smethwick, Sandwell, joined forces to create a vibrant arts project funded by Arts Council England's Let's Create Jubilee Fund. With Black Country Touring's support, **Bearwood Community Hub, CAP Centre, The Dorothy Parkes Centre, and Thimblemill Library** secured £10,000 via the Heart of England Community Foundation to organise four community events featuring live theatre, uniting the diverse communities of Smethwick in celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

The primary goal of this project was to bring Smethwick's communities together after enduring the hardships of the pandemic. Prolonged loneliness, isolation, rising living costs, and the emotional trauma of Covid-19 had taken a toll. Furthermore, limited arts opportunities exacerbated social inequality and deprivation, particularly for low-income families. According to the Active Lives Survey, Sandwell had the lowest arts engagement in the Midlands.

BCT supported the consortium in selecting and promoting professional touring theatre companies. We also assisted in organising creative workshops, booking and contracting theatre companies, event logistics, and marketing.

Community Engagement:

- 474 people attended Smethwick Celebrates events, theatre shows, and workshops.
- 123 people participated in 6 workshops, creating decorations for each venue.
- 98.8% of attendees rated their experience as 'very good' or 'good.'
- Attendees expressed the impact on their well-being and sense of community. Quotes like: "Helps me get out of the house as I haven't been very well" and "Queen's Platinum Jubilee - really special to me" highlight the event's significance to local people

Reaching Underserved Communities:

- 68.5% of attendees lived within 2 miles of the event, demonstrating successful local engagement.
- For 45.4% of attendees, this was the only professional arts event they had attended in the last 12 months, addressing the impact of Covid-19 on arts attendance.
- 67% of attendees were from the lowest 3 deciles for indices of multiple deprivation.
- 22.2% of attendees identified as having a disability, and 20% were from ethnically diverse backgrounds, reaching often underserved communities.

This partnership between the consortium venues and BCT not only brought live theatre to Smethwick but also fostered community, alleviated the effects of the pandemic and addressed inequalities in arts access. Our future aim is to support and expand this creative consortium to bring more cohesive and collaborative projects to Smethwick, bringing its community assets to life in with arts and creativity.

"These opportunities are vital for the wellbeing of our community. We had vulnerable adults and children attending workshops and a show free of charge. We were able to utilise the power of the arts and link it with a historical event, and it will have created lasting memories for all attendees. We also learnt more about the impact of partnership working as the offer we provided overall for the Smethwick community was a lot more than we could have ever done on our own."

-Robert Bruce, Chief Executive, Dorothy Parkes Community Centre

The Head Gardener by Untied Artists

In recent years and for obvious reasons, the nation has collectively embraced the joys of gardening, from tending windowsill herb gardens to embarking on ambitious horticultural projects. Amid this green revolution, Black Country Touring played a pivotal role in bringing a transformative theatre production to life.

Seed Funding

When *The Head Gardener* faced uncertainty due to funding challenges, Black Country Touring stepped in to help Untied Artists bring the project to fruition, as Jake Oldershaw explains:

> *"Without the support of Black Country Touring, our touring performance 'The Head Gardener' simply would not exist. After two unsuccessful Arts Council grant bids, the first tour in 2022 was in serious jeopardy. As an artist and producer, this was deeply worrying as we had a tour of over 20 dates booked.*
>
> *It was at this stage that BCT offered not only enough money for us to finish creating it, but also suggested that visiting various community gardens in the region might also provide inspirational material for the work. This was a process that directly informed the material, and it was a moving and humbling experience to then perform the show in those venues."*
>
> *The result has been 2 tours, over 40 shows, to venues across the country. We also have a good deal of interest for touring in 2024, including several Rekindle library venues, thanks to the pilot scheme we conducted with BCT in Black Country libraries in July 2023"*

We believed that this production that celebrated community, growing and mental health needed to be seen by audiences in The Black Country and beyond. Jake and Warren Oldershaw combined storytelling with live music to create an immersive experience, while their heartfelt songs added depth and resonance. As Warren's garden thrived, it served as a metaphor for the growth and transformation experienced by Warren, Jake and many other people as they connect with nature.

A Breath of Fresh Air

"A joyful, courageous, and inspiring piece of theatre, just what Riverside House stands for. The living garden on stage mirrored the growth we all aspire to."

"A spectacular live performance, touching and skillfully delivered. It felt like stepping into a world where the boundaries between the stage and the audience dissolved."

"Your story touched me deeply, promoting nature's healing power. Your brotherly bond was heartwarming and added a layer of authenticity to the narrative."

Stories
LOOKING UP

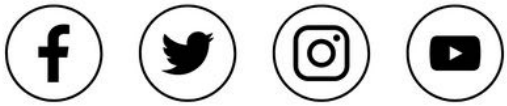
Trustees & Team

Trustees

Timothy Rushby, Chair
Imtiaz Dungarwalla, Vice Chair
Akila McLean
Julie McKirdy
Hitesh Patel (resigned November 2022)
Carla Priddon
Paul Reece

Black Country Touring Team

Frances Land, Co-Artistic Director
Steve Johnstone, Co-Artistic Director
Matt Andrews, Development Director
Corinne Morris, General Manager (joined June 2022)
Deb Justice, Company Manager (resigned June 2022)
Natalie Kidman, Promoter Manager
Sampira Al-Fihri, Creative Producer
Bobby Tiwana, Development Producer (Freelance)
Amrit Kaur Juss, Marketing & Communications Coordinator
Olivia James, Community Cinema Coordinator (Freelance)
Donna Clarkson, Community Programme Coordinator (from April 2023)
Laura Leech, Administration & Projects Assistant



Black Country Touring | @bct_touring

www.bctouring.org.uk

Black Country Touring
c/o Thimblemill Library
Thimblemill Road
Smethwick
West Midlands
B67 5RJ

Charity No: 1080608
Company No: 3446320

Black Country Touring is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

Company registration number: 3446320

Charity registration number: 1080608

Black Country Touring

(A company limited by guarantee)

Annual Report and Financial Statements

for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

Bissell & Brown Birmingham Limited
12 Portman Rd, Kings Heath
Birmingham
B13 0SL

Black Country Touring

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Notes to the Financial Statements	8 to 14

Black Country Touring

Trustees' Report

The trustees, who are directors for the purposes of company law, present the annual report together with the financial statements of the charitable company for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Structure, governance and management

Nature of governing document

The company is limited by guarantee and does not have a share capital. It is governed by Memorandum and Articles of Association and was incorporated on 8th October 1997. It was registered as a Charity on 8th May 2000.

Organisational structure

Chief Executives : Steve Johnstone & Frances Johnstone

Company Secretary: Frances Johnstone

General Manager: Corinne Morris (appointed during the year)

Company Manager: Deb Justice (resigned during year)

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

Recruitment and Appointment of New Trustees
1 Members of the Committee will be invited on the basis of their working expertise and experience, and/or their background and other experiences and skills. The committee as a whole will aim to reflect the broad make-up and cultural diversity of the Black Country and the West Midlands.

2 As a general rule, there should be a relationship between the Company and a person proposed for Committee membership. The person proposed should know something of Black Country Touring's work. This criterion does not apply to people offering specific skills.

3 The time limits for membership laid down in the constitution should be applied consciously, rather than renewing automatically.

4 There should be a provision for new members to be brought on for a fixed term of one or two years in the first instance, with the possibility of extension to full membership, after review. (Co-options for specific projects or developments are already laid down in the constitution)

In applying these criteria Black Country Touring will take a pro-active approach in fully operating its policy of equal opportunities.

Induction and training of trustees

All proposed new members must be provided with an induction pack and have a formal discussion with a member of the Company's staff, before their final approval by the Committee.

These guidelines run alongside the terms of Black Country Touring's Articles of Association.

Objectives and activities

Public benefit

In the exercise of their powers as charity trustees, they have had due regard to the published guidance from the Charity Commission on the operation of the public benefit requirement, and the aims of the charity are carried out for the public benefit.

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the requirements of section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

Black Country Touring

Trustees' Report

Objects and aims

The objects of the Company are to promote, maintain, improve and advance the education of the public by the encouragement and practice of the arts, by fostering and promoting for the benefit of the public the improvement and development of artistic knowledge, taste, understanding, and application of the arts and in particular but not exclusively, to provide arts based activities and encourage participation by all sections of the community in such activities in the Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley and Sandwell Metropolitan Boroughs and their environs.

Trustees and officers

The trustees and officers serving during the year and since the year end were as follows:

Trustees:	Timothy Rushby
	Imtiaz Dungarwalla
	Carla Priddon
	Julie McKirdy
	Paul Reece
	Akila Mclean

Achievements and performance

See attached Annual Report

Financial review

See attached Annual Report

Policy on reserves

The income and expenditure of the charity fluctuates according to the pattern of grant and project income secured. As the Charity employs a number of staff, the Management Committee (Trustees) consider that reserves are needed to provide for an orderly wind-down in the event of an unexpected reduction in the funds secured. The Charity is also required on occasion to incur the costs of developing and researching work before the grants which have been awarded, and other income, are actually received. The Charity therefore needs a level of reserves for cash flow reasons. In the opinion of the Management Committee the reserves of the Charity are appropriate for its scale of operation.

Black Country Touring

Trustees' Report

Reference and Administrative Details

Charity Registration Number:	1080608
Company Registration Number:	3446320
	The charity is incorporated in England and Wales.
Registered Office:	Thimblemill Library Thimblemill Rd Smethwick B67 5RJ
Principal Office:	Thimblemill Library Thimblemill Rd Smethwick B67 5RJ
Independent Examiner:	Bissell & Brown Birmingham Limited 12 Portman Rd, Kings Heath Birmingham B13 0SL
Bankers:	The Co-operative Bank

The annual report was approved by the trustees of the charity on 10/10/21 and signed on its behalf by:

Timothy Rushby
Trustee

Black Country Touring

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

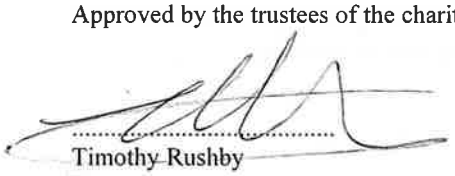
The trustees (who are also the directors of Black Country Touring for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with the United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are 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.

Approved by the trustees of the charity on 10/10/23 and signed on its behalf by:



Timothy Rushby
Trustee

Black Country Touring

Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of Black Country Touring ("the Company")

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of Black Country Touring are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the Company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of Bissell & Brown Birmingham Ltd, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of Black Country Touring as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act 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
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities [applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)].

I have no concerns and 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.

.....

B J Matthews, FCA
Bissell & Brown Birmingham Ltd
12 Portman Rd, Kings Heath
Birmingham
B13 0SL

Date: 10/1/23

Black Country Touring

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Income and Endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	2	196	-	196	1,398
Charitable activities	10	348,866	125,500	474,366	391,422
Other income		146	-	146	-
Total Income		349,208	125,500	474,708	392,820
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	14	(349,208)	(124,851)	(474,059)	(349,607)
Total Expenditure		(349,208)	(124,851)	(474,059)	(349,607)
Net income		-	649	649	43,213
Net movement in funds		-	649	649	43,213
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		92,805	97,985	190,790	147,577
Total funds carried forward	9	92,805	98,634	191,439	190,790

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

Black Country Touring

(Registration number: 3446320)
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	4	882	-
Current assets			
Debtors	5	21,391	16,437
Cash at bank and in hand	6	175,307	204,266
		196,698	220,703
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	7	(6,141)	(29,913)
Net current assets		190,557	190,790
Net assets		191,439	190,790
Funds of the charity:			
Restricted income funds			
Restricted funds	9	98,634	97,985
Unrestricted income funds			
Unrestricted funds		92,805	92,805
Total funds	9	191,439	190,790

For the financial year ending 31 March 2023 the charity was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the charity to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476; and
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

The financial statements on pages 6 to 14 were approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue on 10/10/23 and signed on their behalf by:

Timothy Rushby
Trustee

The notes on pages 8 to 14 form an integral part of these financial statements.

1 Accounting policies

Summary of significant accounting policies and key accounting estimates
The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

Statement of compliance
The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with 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)) (issued in October 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Basis of preparation
Black Country Touring meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

Going concern
The Trustees have considered budgets and cash flow forecasts through to October 2021, and the level of post year-end support received from Arts Council England. On this basis, the trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern nor any significant areas of uncertainty that affect the carrying value of assets held by the charity.

Exemption from preparing a cash flow statement
The charity opted to early adopt Bulletin 1 published on 2 February 2016 and have therefore not included a cash flow statement in these financial statements.

Income and endowments
All income is recognised once the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of the income receivable can be measured reliably.

Donations and legacies

Donations are recognised when the charity has been notified in writing of both the amount and settlement date. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance by the charity before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that these conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Deferred income

Deferred income represents amounts received for future periods and is released to incoming resources in the period for which, it has been received. Such income is only deferred when:

- The donor specifies that the grant or donation must only be used in future accounting periods; or
- The donor has imposed conditions which must be met before the charity has unconditional entitlement.

Expenditure

All expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to that expenditure, it is probable settlement is required and the amount can be measured reliably. All costs are allocated to the applicable expenditure heading that aggregate similar costs to that category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of resources, with central staff costs allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use. Other support costs are allocated based on the spread of staff costs.

Charitable activities

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Taxation

The charity is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

Tangible fixed assets

Individual fixed assets costing £500.00 or more are initially recorded at cost, less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation is provided on tangible fixed assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value, over their expected useful economic life as follows:

Asset class	Depreciation method and rate
Equipment	33.33% straight-line

Fund structure

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees' discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Restricted income funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

2 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Donations and legacies;			
Donations from individuals	196	196	398
Trusts and foundations	-	-	1,000
	196	196	1,398

4 Tangible fixed assets

	Note	Furniture and equipment £	Total 2023 £
Cost			
At 1 April 2022		22,782	22,782
Additions		1,323	1,323
At 31 March 2023		24,105	24,105
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2022		22,782	22,782
Charge for the year		441	441
At 31 March 2023		23,223	23,223
Net book value			
At 31 March 2023		882	882
At 31 March 2022		-	-

5 Debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade debtors	13,391	14,437
Other debtors	8,000	2,000
	21,391	16,437

6 Cash and cash equivalents

	2023 £	2022 £
Cash at bank	175,307	204,266

7 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Other taxation and social security	4,441	3,102
Accruals	1,700	9,505
Deferred income	-	17,306
	6,141	29,913

8 Charity status

The charity is limited by guarantee, incorporated in England and Wales, and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the trustees is liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the charity in the event of liquidation.

The principal place of business is:
Thimblemill Library
Thimblemill Rd
Smethwick
B67 5RJ

9 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Unrestricted funds				
General				
General unrestricted	77,633	349,208	(349,208)	77,633
Designated				
Development reserve	15,172	-	-	15,172
Total unrestricted funds	92,805	349,208	(349,208)	92,805
Restricted funds				
SCVO Epic	4,985	-	(4,985)	-
Esmee Fairbairn	93,000	44,000	(106,866)	30,134
D'Oyly Carte	-	3,500	-	3,500
Saintbury	-	3,000	-	3,000
The Postcode Lottery	-	75,000	(13,000)	62,000
Total restricted funds	97,985	125,500	(124,851)	98,634
Total funds	190,790	474,708	(474,059)	191,439

10 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Arts Council core grant	146,137	-	146,137	146,137
Arts Council Culture Recovery Fund	-	-	-	5,016
Local authorities project income	26,332	-	26,332	26,335
Programme projects and production income	-	-	-	22,875
Fees and shows	143,002	-	143,002	48,254
BFI - Black Country Community Cinema	26,902	-	26,902	14,000
Esmee Fairbairn	-	44,000	44,000	90,000
Sandwell	-	-	-	13,374
Post Code Lottery	-	75,000	75,000	-
SCVO	-	-	-	18,508
Saintbury Trust	-	3,000	3,000	-
D'oyly Carte	-	3,500	3,500	-
Other income	1,093	-	1,093	6,923
A & H Pilkington	1,000	-	1,000	-
The Feeney Trust	4,400	-	4,400	-
	348,866	125,500	474,366	391,422

11 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net incoming resources for the year include:

	2023 £

12 Staff costs

The monthly average number of persons (including senior management / leadership team) employed by the charity during the year expressed as full time equivalents was as follows:

	2023 No	2022 No
Staff	8	7

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year.

13 Trustees remuneration and expenses

No trustees, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year.

No trustees have received any reimbursed expenses from the charity during the year.

14 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £	2023 £ 2022 £ Total 2022 £
Black Country Cinema cost	29,488	-	29,488	25,306
Productions & performances	30,878	84,851	115,729	86,548
Artistic directors	45,317	-	45,317	41,746
Marketing & publicity	7,863	-	7,863	1,015
Travelling & subsistence	1,956	-	1,956	537
Salaries & employers NI & pension	129,804	40,000	169,804	130,195
Development	-	-	-	13,000
Training	3,149	-	3,149	50
Insurance	1,763	-	1,763	1,762
Rent	7,042	-	7,042	6,293
Computer/ network	2,309	-	2,309	5,325
Printing, postage & stationery	2,030	-	2,030	-
Shows & performances	73,832	-	73,832	25,899
Telephone	300	-	300	1,266
Independent examination	1,766	-	1,766	1,943

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Subscriptions	2,174	-	2,174	3,466
Repairs	-	-	-	3,714
Other coststt	7,238	-	7,238	-
Bank charges	67	-	67	244
Removal costs	1,791	-	1,791	3,275
Depreciation	441	-	441	-
	349,208	124,851	474,059	351,584

15 Taxation

The charity is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation.

BLACK COUNTRY TOURING

England & Wales - Charity number 1080608

Accounts

Annual Report 21/22

& Financial Statements

BLACK COUNTRY TOURING

Funders & Supporters

Thanks to our 2021/22 funders and partners:

Supported using public funding by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Esmée Fairbairn FOUNDATION

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL

SCVO connecting · enabling · transforming

CREATIVE CBC BLACK COUNTRY

BLACK COUNTRY LIVING MUSEUM

BIRMINGHAM 2022 FESTIVAL commonwealth games

BRITISH COUNCIL

HM Government HERE FOR CULTURE

2022 21 COVENTRY UK CITY OF CULTURE

Pop-Up Poetry was commissioned by Multistory as part of We Are Wednesbury cultural programme:

we are WEDNESBURY

multi story

Supported using public funding by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

BLACK COUNTRY TOURING

Funded by Historic England

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

HM Government

About

Black Country Touring (BCT) produces and promotes high-quality theatre, dance and film in the Black Country, putting local communities at the heart of everything we do.

Vision

Our vision is of a Black Country where everyone has the opportunity to experience captivating, inspiring and diverse performances in their community, regardless of their background, age or income.

Mission

We believe the arts have the potential to change lives by allowing us to see new possibilities, develop new skills and provide opportunities to reflect on our own lives, communities and the wider world.

We work with people across the Black Country to select and present the very best available artists and companies to our local communities.

We endeavour to make our work accessible to, and reflective of, the diverse communities that make up the Black Country.

We collaborate with artists and local people to create new work born out of contemporary Black Country stories for both local and national audiences.

Work

All of BCT's work is focused on creating opportunities for local people to experience theatre, dance and film. They are actively involved in programming, promoting and creating performances, events and festivals. We achieve this through four strands:

- **Community Promoters**: An urban touring network that covers libraries, community centres, museums and galleries, supporting volunteer promoters working in their community to select and promote touring theatre, dance and film

- **Young Promoters:** Schoolchildren and young people aged from 5 – 18 in mainstream and SEN education transform their school or college into a venue for a touring production, learning the skills required to run a theatre venue

- **Original Productions:** Site-specific theatre productions that reflect the cultural diversity and the lived experiences of Black Country people - their histories, origins, memories, interests, hopes and aspirations

- **Community Cinema:** We support local people and venues to bring an immersive cinema experience to their community. The focus is on bringing people together to enjoy the magic of film, programming everything from sing-alongs to documentaries

Impact of Covid-19 on 2021/22 Programme

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic BCT's core programme of live events, productions and projects continued to be disrupted during 2021/22. The ever-changing and prolonged nature of the pandemic, continued social distancing measures and lockdowns meant the closure of nearly all of the community venues we work with – libraries, community centres, places of worship - the places that bring people together.

Data Collection During 2021/22: Due to Covid-19 and the different ways in which we've been working, we have not been able to collect data in the usual way. This has impacted on the level of audience analysis we are able to conduct for this year.

Chair's Statement

Rebuild, Reconnect, Reimagine

Tim Rushby, Chair of Black Country Touring, reflects on a transitional year

The pandemic continued to have a significant impact on Black Country Touring (BCT) and the wider arts sector in 2021-22. The ongoing uncertainty and understandable reluctance of many of our community venues, meant that much of our regular live activity continued at a standstill, particularly in the first half of the year. As Chair, I was pleased to see the organisation build on the experimentation of last year, which saw a creative response to engaging our communities during lockdowns. BCT continued its engaging programme of 'socially distanced' projects and delivered a genuinely innovative international project, alongside supporting its community partners to resume programming in local venues.

The team have shown real resilience and adaptability throughout this period, for example adapting ***Pop-Up Poetry*** in Wednesbury to ensure that local people could engage safely with artists and performances during the winter and the emergence of the Omicron variant.

As we moved into 2022, there was a greater sense of optimism and momentum as the company began planning for ***What's In Store***, which took place in June 2022 and was part of the cultural programme for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. It was thrilling to be once again able to look forward to animating small spaces with big ideas, diverse worldviews and fantastic artists. The pandemic and the absence of live events that enable people to come together really highlighted how essential the arts are to our wellbeing and sense of togetherness and belonging.

What's In Store has been enabled in large part by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation's Reinvent Performing Arts fund, which we were invited to apply for at the beginning of the year. A grant of £50,000 from the Foundation in 2021 transformed the scale of the event and enabled us to deliver an ambitious site-specific production, engaging thousands of local residents. The grant has also provided essential funds to continue experimenting with podcasts as a medium for artists from under-represented backgrounds to tell stories about our often-overlooked region, and enabled us to provide additional support to our community venues as they rebuild their programmes, and to artists who are making work specifically for community settings. Much of this ambitious work will be realised in 2022 and I look forward to reflecting on it further in next year's annual report.

Rupinder Kaur performs in What's In Store and Where Are You? at Bear Books (June 2022)

We are also grateful to the British Council for their support of our fruitful international collaboration with Accra Theatre Workshop in Ghana. Remarkably, such an exciting relationship has been sparked across two continents without either organisation ever meeting in person. The R&D project ***Bearwood to Dzorwulu, Dzorwulu to Bearwood*** has laid the groundwork for future collaboration - including Where Are You?, a theatre production for families staged simultaneously in Accra and Bearwood, with interactions between the cast in each location over livestream.

Organisational Development

Although challenging, 2021-22 was also a year of positive change and growth for the organisation, with two new members joining the team. Amrit Kaur Juss joined as Marketing & Communications Coordinator in December, in a new, full-time role for the organisation. BCT's marketing capacity and online reach has long been under-resourced, so I am pleased to see the impact this role has already had on the organisation and its projects. We also recruited Sampira Al-Fihri to the role of Creative Producer - she brings fresh energy and a new perspective to the organisation's site-specific producing work.

Both of these appointments were made from the most diverse pool of applicants for roles that BCT has ever received, which is a testament to the time invested by the team in reviewing and revising our recruitment processes in order to help make future recruitment processes as accessible as possible.

In late 2021-22, the Board also began a recruitment process to bring new Trustees to the organisation. We will continue to uphold our commitment to the board being reflective of the rich diversity of the Black Country and will aim to retain 40% of the board from under-represented backgrounds, including individuals who identify as LGBTQ+, d/Deaf, Disabled, neurodiverse or are from an ethnically diverse background. This process will carry on throughout 2022-23.

Supporting the freelance artists and creative practitioners, who were so hard-hit financially and creatively by the pandemic, remained a key focus throughout the year. We passionately believe in nurturing artistic talent and expression and building strong ongoing relationships with artists. This year, 28 freelance artists were employed by BCT across both digital and physical productions, of which 71% were from an ethnically diverse background.

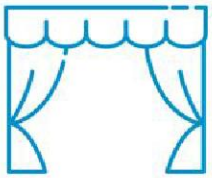
2021-22 was also defined by looking forward to the next round of Arts Council's National Portfolio, and our proposal of a bold and exciting 3-year programme that aligns closely with the Let's Create strategy. As I write this, we wait with anticipation for ACE's decision, but the Board are convinced that the organisation is in the strongest position it has ever been to deliver on its ambition for the communities of the Black Country. We ended the year in a stable position financially, but we also recognise the ongoing need to make the organisation sustainable long-term, through concerted fundraising efforts and effective financial management.

Tim Rushby, Chair
Black Country Touring

RM Francis & Adaya Henry perform in Pop-Up Poetry in Wednesbury, December 2021

21/22 Programme

14,900 people attended events, performances and productions supported or produced by Black Country Touring



Community & Young Promoters featured **72** performances of **30** individual touring productions or acts, in **14** venues across the Black Country.

3,200 people engaged with our digital projects, including the ***Black Country Stories*** **podcast** and performances over the phone.

554 people attended **Community Cinema** screenings, both online and in person.

Brilliant night after all the troubles. Best way to start a new beginning.

It was a hoot and lovely to see everyone after the lockdown.

Great to feel part of the world again after covid!! Nice to support local theatre & local venue.

So lovely to get to know Wednesbury and a glimpse through wonderful poetry into the lives and goings on that occur there, fabulous.

Great to have a theatre experience right on your doorstep.

Community

Left: Peter Chand, Sam Frankie Fox & Ricardo Santos-Rocha perform at Caldmore Community Garden's Festival of Lights, November 2021. Right: The Festival of Lights.

Community & Young Promoters

The pandemic continued to disrupt the Community Promoters touring scheme throughout 2021/22, but we continued to work hard to maintain links with our community venues and volunteers, as many of them continued to provide frontline support to local people affected by Covid-19. This included programming online shows for families, as well as carefully managed live events with reduced capacity or by invitation only, as well as several large-scale outdoor performances, including Caldmore Community Garden's Festival of Light event in Walsall, a children's festival at Newhampton Arts Centre and an event at Himley Hall and Park.

In total, 14,765 people attended live Community Promoter events in 2021/22.

Unfortunately, live Young Promoters activity continued to largely be on hold during this year, but BCT's Promoter Manager continued to liaise with schools and 4 sessions took place online with Pens Meadow SEN school ahead of a live show, organised by pupils.

Coventry City of Culture 2021/22

BCT continued to provide programming and management support to **Theatre Next Door,** a pilot touring scheme featuring 6 community centres. Many of the venues had not previously programmed live theatre and dance, so a focus was programming shows that were accessible, welcoming and inclusive.

1,215 people attended 10 performances in 2021/22

Community Cinema

Like Community Promoters, the Community Cinema project was heavily disrupted by Covid-19 in 2021/22, but continued to reach audiences via online screenings, Q&As and events, including the Let's Talk Film mini-festival, which was based around the theme of hope.

We were delighted to resume live screenings in September, working with AGE UK at the Wesley Centre in Wednesbury and Rowley Regis Disability Centre and at Dorothy Parkes Community Centre.

We are grateful to **SCVO** and **Film Hub Midlands** for the continued support of the Community Cinema project, particularly as we navigated the challenges of this year.

'It's certainly given me a sense of meaning and purpose after retirement and gives me something to do. Personally for me it's reduced my social isolation, given me a chance to meet other people and it's certainly helped with my mental well being,' - Jim (volunteer, Wesley Centre Community Cinema)

This has helped me to feel like part of the community, one big happy family in unity,' Sharna (audience member)

'Great film, wouldn't have thought to watch this film, if not for this event,' Audience member

Producing

A Word in Your Ear

April - June 2021

"These are the stories to be found
never silenced, never lost, they live
in the fabric of community, echo along the
lines of a phone call, a visit, *how you doing*
shout from outside the window."

-Extract from Roy MacFarlane's 'Hope For Better Days'

A Word In Your Ear built on the one-to-one telephone format developed for Dial-A-Story in 2021, with seven artists performing for small groups from local community groups Sandwell Visually Impaired, Thimblemill Bookworms reading group, Willenhall Wombles litter pickers, Anthem! choir, Just Straight Talk, Ideal For All, Mothership and Bearwood Community Hub. Each artist created new poems and songs based on their conversations and shared them back with the groups.

The creative team consisted of poets Adrian Earle, Emma Purshouse, Jasmine Gardosi and Roy McFarlane and music duo Ricardo Santos-Rocha & Sam Frankie Fox. Designer Abigail King created tactile artworks for two visually impaired groups. **69 people participated in the sessions.**

A short series documenting the process and capturing the performances was released on the Black Country Stories podcast channel in December 2021, hosted by poet and broadcaster Ian Macmillan.

Dial-A-Story

April - May 2021

Our successful phone project returned thanks to a commission by Creative Black Country as part of 'The F Words', a project that created opportunities for fun, fabulous, feel-good activities that brought people together during dark times. Dial-A-Story aimed to address the digital divide across the region using more traditional methods that don't just rely on being connected digitally.

It featured musician Sam Frankie Fox, poet Adrian Earle and storyteller Peter Chand, working with people recruited through local voluntary sector organisations including blind/visually impaired groups. **100 people in total attended intimate one-to-one performances.**

Participant Feedback for Dial-A-Story:

"I found the whole experience a very wonderful and surprisingly touching one - contact with creative performance on such a personal level felt really special."

I"t was really nice, I would love to do it again. I was feeling really down but they helped me to reminisce about when I used to dance and listen to music"

"I've been feeling a bit low today, and this has really given me a lift. I've just been inspired to pickup my paint brush, even though I'm not much of a painter. Thank you"

Bearwood to Dzorwulu, Dzorwulu to Bearwood - R&D Project

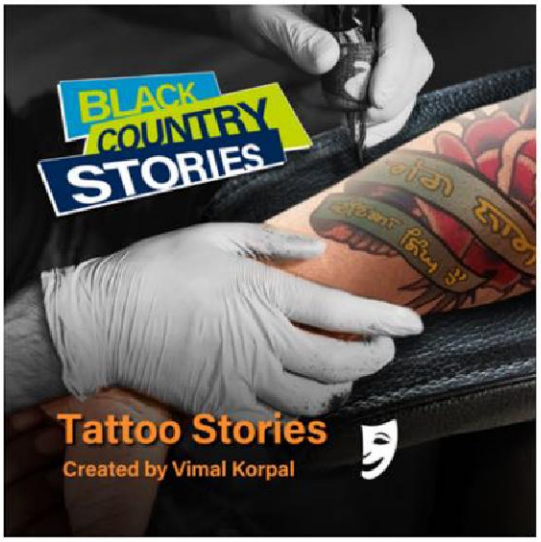
Summer 2021

A new collaboration between Black Country Touring and Accra Theatre Workshop, in Ghana. We worked together on a digital R&D project supported by Birmingham Festival 2022 and the British Council. The project explored the themes of community and belonging during the pandemic between Bearwood, England and Dzorwulu, Ghana. The creative team consisted of artists located in both countries collaborating entirely using the technology that became so vital during Covid-19, such as Zoom, Slack and Whatsapp. The project culminated in the production of two films -' Bearwood to Dzorwulu' and 'Motherly'.

This exciting collaboration showed the potential for technology to enable collaboration across continents in ways that would not have seemed possible previously. The partnership led to the creation of ***Where Are You?***, a theatre show for families produced by both companies, which featured in the Birmingham Festival 2022, the Commonwealth Games cultural programme in June 2022, again supported by the British Council.

Black Country Stories Podcast

September - December 2021



During Autumn 2021, BCT released a new 9-episode podcast series, focused on unearthing stories from the region and providing opportunities for artists to explore storytelling in the podcast format. In addition to ***A Word In Your Ear***, as detailed above, the following episodes were released:

Voices of the Fairground (3 episodes): commissioned by Sandwell Museums, which focused on stories of travelling fairgrounds in the Black Country. Written and presented by artist Rochi Rampal, with music and production by sound artist Duncan Grimley.

Summer. It's late in the evening and it's warm. You're walking through the park, under the trees, you take a seat on your favourite bench and you look out... but tonight, things are different... the park has changed.

Tonight, a whole new world has been transported into it, as though dropped from outer space. A blur of flashes and noise. Mechanical limbs reaching upwards, flinging and rotating.

Tattoo Stories by Vimal Korpal (1 episode): "*Every tattoo tells a story, whether it's for love, memory, anger, legacy, imprint, personal, exhibitionism, carnival, motivation, reminder, survival, patriotism or cosmetic, everyone has a reason for having tattoos, and every tattooist has their own tales to tell. These stories need to be heard*". Drawing on 40 interviews conducted by the artist, this pilot episode focuses on why people have names tattooed on them.

Season 2 of Black Country Stories will be released in Autumn 2022, supported by Esmée Fairbairn Foundation's *Reinvent Performing Arts* Fund.

Pop-Up Poetry

December 2021

Pop Up Poetry, commissioned by Multistory for the Wednesbury High Street Heritage Action Zone cultural programme, was Black Country Touring's first live site-specific work since the pandemic began. It is the first part of a three year collaboration, which will see BCT deliver a town centre festival focusing on the independent shops in 2022 and a street festival produced by young people from Wednesbury in 2023.

During the first two weeks of December, four poets took up residency in two independent shops and two cafes in the town centre. Bohdan Piasecki, R.M. Francis, Adaya Henry and Richard Grant (aka Dreadlockalien) spent time engaging with customers in Blue Sheep Books, Vintage Tea Room & Café, Boobielous clothing and Junction 9 ¾ - a Harry Potter-themed café.

They created and performed new work inspired by their interactions with the customers, the staff and the business owners. Audiences were able to watch the performances by joining one of five walking tours between the four businesses or by dropping in along the way. The final poems explored themes such as time and memory, shone a spotlight on the independent businesses that are a vital part of Wednesbury high street, and told the stories of the local community.

Award-winning filmmaker, Michael Ellis, created a short film documenting the project.

Sector Support

During 2021/22, BCT provided support to the following arts organisations and artists:

- Fundraising and bid-writing support to ME Dance, a Sandwell-based dance company, for their project Chain Stories, for Birmingham Festival 2022;
- Fundraising and/or mentoring support for artists Lucy Hayward, Byron Jackson, Arzhang Pezhman and Caldmore Community Gardens in Walsall, who both applied to Arts Council Project Grants;

BCT is a member of the following strategic regional and national groups, initiatives and partnership projects:

- **Creative Black Country Partnership Board:** the region's Creative People and Places project
- **Culture Central and More Than A Moment:** stay informed about the wider sector's response to Covid-19, including lobbying central government and feeding into reports on the challenges faced by the West Midlands arts industry, as well as membership of More Than A Moment, a group that seeks equity and opportunity for Black artists and sector professionals;
- **Sandwell Cultural Leaders:** Frances Land, Co-Artistic Director, attended these meetings around future cultural activity in Sandwell with the Commonwealth games as a major event to trigger future investment and activity;
- **Wolverhampton & Walsall Culture Compacts:** the Compacts are strategic cross-sector partnerships driven by culture's contribution to social and economic development, bringing together the local authority, university, college, businesses, leisure sector, city developers, cultural and creative organisations, health sector, community representatives, and voluntary sector to co-design and deliver a vision for culture in the city;
- **Sandwell Cultural Forum:** BCT staff members attend monthly meetings to share opportunities and keep linked in with other attendees;
- **National Rural Touring Forum**
- **Wednesbury Heritage Action Zone:** BCT is part of a consortium led by Multistory to develop a three year programme of activity focused on Wednesbury Town Centre

Trustees & Team

Trustees

Timothy Rushby, Chair
Imtiaz Dungarwalla, Vice Chair
Akila McLean
Julie McKirdy
Hitesh Patel
Carla Priddon
Paul Reece

Kayleigh Talbot (resigned November 2021)
Elizabeth Lawal (resigned November 2021)

Black Country Touring Team

Frances Land, Co-Artistic Director
Steve Johnstone, Co-Artistic Director
Matt Andrews, Development Manager
Deb Justice, Company Manager
Natalie Kidman, Promoter Manager
Sampira Al-Fihri, Creative Producer
Bobby Tiwana, Development Producer (Freelance)
Amrit Kaur Juss, Marketing & Communications Coordinator
Olivia James, Community Cinema Coordinator
Donna Clarkson, Administration & Projects Assistant

Black Country Touring
c/o Thimblemill Library
Thimblemill Road
Smethwick
West Midlands
B67 5RJ

Charity No: 1080608
Company No: 3446320

Black Country Touring is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

Company registration number: 3446320

Charity registration number: 1080608

Black Country Touring

(A company limited by guarantee)

Annual Report and Financial Statements

for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

Bissell & Brown Birmingham Limited
12 Portman Rd, Kings Heath
Birmingham
B13 0SL

Black Country Touring

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Black Country Touring

Reference and Administrative Details

Trustees	Timothy Rushby Imtiaz Dungarwalla Carla Priddon Julie McKirdy Paul Reece Hitesh Patel Akila Mclean
Charity Registration Number	1080608
Company Registration Number	3446320
	The charity is incorporated in England and Wales.
Registered Office	Bearwood Hub St Marys C of E Church St Mary's Rd/ Bearwood Rd Bearwood, Smethwick B66 4BX
Independent Examiner	Bissell & Brown Birmingham Limited 12 Portman Rd, Kings Heath Birmingham B13 0SL
Accountants	Bissell & Brown Midlands Limited Chartered Certified Accountants Charter House 56 High Street Sutton Coldfield West Midlands B72 1UJ
Bankers	The Co-operative Bank

Black Country Touring

Reference and Administrative Details

Trustees

Timothy Rushby
Imtiaz Dungarwalla
Carla Priddon
Akila Mclean
Julie McKirdy
Paul Reece
Hitesh Patel

Charity Registration Number

1080608

Company Registration Number

3446320

The charity is incorporated in England and Wales.

Registered Office

Bearwood Hub
St Marys C of E Church
St Mary's Rd/ Bearwood Rd
Bearwood, Smethwick
B66 4BX

Independent Examiner

Bissell & Brown Birmingham Limited
12 Portman Rd, Kings Heath
Birmingham
B13 0SL

Accountants

Bissell & Brown Midlands Limited
Chartered Certified Accountants
Charter House
56 High Street
Sutton Coldfield
West Midlands
B72 1UJ

Bankers

CAF Bank

Black Country Touring

Trustees' Report

The trustees, who are directors for the purposes of company law, present the annual report together with the financial statements of the charitable company for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Structure, governance and management

Nature of governing document

The company is limited by guarantee and does not have a share capital. It is governed by Memorandum and Articles of Association and was incorporated on 8th October 1997. It was registered as a Charity on 8th May 2000.

Organisational structure

Chief Executives : Steve Johnstone & Frances Johnstone

Company Secretary Frances Johnstone

Personnel: the following changes took place this year:

Joanne Blunt resigned from the position of Adminstration & Communications Coordinator

Sampira Al-Fihri joined as Creative Producer

Amrit Kaur Juss joined as Marketing & Communications Coordinator

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

Recruitment and Appointment of New Trustees
1 Members of the Committee will be invited on the basis of their working expertise and experience, and/or their background and other experiences and skills. The committee as a whole will aim to reflect the broad make-up and cultural diversity of the Black Country and the West Midlands.

2 As a general rule, there should be a relationship between the Company and a person proposed for Committee membership. The person proposed should know something of Black Country Touring's work. This criterion does not apply to people offering specific skills.

3 The time limits for membership laid down in the constitution should be applied consciously, rather than renewing automatically.

4 There should be a provision for new members to be brought on for a fixed term of one or two years in the first instance, with the possibility of extension to full membership, after review. (Co-options for specific projects or developments are already laid down in the constitution)

In applying these criteria Black Country Touring will take a pro-active approach in fully operating its policy of equal opportunities.

Induction and training of trustees

All proposed new members must be provided with an induction pack and have a formal discussion with a member of the Company's staff, before their final approval by the Committee.

These guidelines run alongside the terms of Black Country Touring's Articles of Association.

Objectives and activities

Public benefit

In the exercise of their powers as charity trustees, they have had due regard to the published guidance from the Charity Commission on the operation of the public benefit requirement, and the aims of the charity are carried out for the public benefit.

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the requirements of section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

Objects and aims

The objects of the Company are to promote, maintain, improve and advance the education of the public by the encouragement and practice of the arts, by fostering and promoting for the benefit of the public the improvement and development of artistic knowledge, taste, understanding, and application of the arts and in particular but not exclusively, to provide arts based activities and encourage participation by all sections of the community in such activities in the Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley and Sandwell Metropolitan Boroughs and their environs.

Trustees and officers

The trustees and officers serving during the year and since the year end were as follows:

Trustees:

Timothy Rushby

Imtiaz Dungarwalla

Elizabeth Lawal (resigned 23 November 2021)

Carla Priddon

Akila Mclean
Julie McKirdy

Paul Reece

Hitesh Patel

Kayleigh Talbot (resigned 23 November 2021)

Achievements and performance
See Annual Review 2021/22 (attached)

Financial review
See Annual Review 2021/22 (attached)

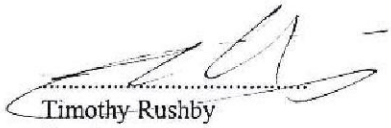
Policy on reserves

The income and expenditure of the charity fluctuates according to the pattern of grant and project income secured. As the Charity employs a number of staff, the Management Committee (Trustees) consider that reserves are needed to provide for

Black Country Touring

Trustees' Report

The annual report was approved by the trustees of the charity on 17/11/22 and signed on its behalf by:



Timothy Rushby
Trustee

Black Country Touring

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

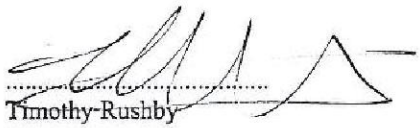
The trustees (who are also the directors of Black Country Touring for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with the United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are 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.

Approved by the trustees of the charity on 17/11/22 and signed on its behalf by:



Timothy Rushby
Trustee

Black Country Touring

Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of Black Country Touring ("the Company")

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of Black Country Touring are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the Company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of Bissell & Brown Birmingham Ltd, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of Black Country Touring as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act 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
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities [applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)].

I have no concerns and 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.

.....

B J Matthews, FCA
Bissell & Brown Birmingham Ltd
12 Portman Rd, Kings Heath
Birmingham
B13 0SL

Date:..... 17/11/2022

Black Country Touring

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2022 (Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Income and Endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	2	1,398	-	1,398	995
Charitable activities	9	277,898	113,524	391,422	299,844
Total Income		279,296	113,524	392,820	300,839
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	13	(259,437)	(90,170)	(349,607)	(236,190)
Total Expenditure		(259,437)	(90,170)	(349,607)	(236,190)
Net income		19,859	23,354	43,213	64,649
Net movement in funds		19,859	23,354	43,213	64,649
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		72,947	74,630	147,577	82,929
Total funds carried forward	8	92,806	97,984	190,790	147,578

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

Black Country Touring

(Registration number: 3446320)
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2022

	Note	2022 £	2021 £
Current assets			
Debtors	4	16,437	10,512
Cash at bank and in hand	5	204,266	153,258
		220,703	163,770
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	6	(29,913)	(16,192)
Net assets		190,790	147,578
Funds of the charity:			
Restricted income funds			
Restricted funds	8	97,985	74,630
Unrestricted income funds			
Unrestricted funds		92,805	72,948
Total funds	8	190,790	147,578

For the financial year ending 31 March 2022 the charity was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the charity to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476; and
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

The financial statements on pages 7 to 14 were approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue on 17/11/22 and signed on their behalf by:

Timothy Rushby
Trustee

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

1 Accounting policies

Summary of significant accounting policies and key accounting estimates
The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

Statement of compliance
The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with 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)) (issued in October 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Basis of preparation
Black Country Touring meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

Going concern
The Trustees have considered budgets and cash flow forecasts through to October 2021, and the level of post year-end support received from Arts Council England. On this basis, the trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern nor any significant areas of uncertainty that affect the carrying value of assets held by the charity.

Exemption from preparing a cash flow statement
The charity opted to early adopt Bulletin 1 published on 2 February 2016 and have therefore not included a cash flow statement in these financial statements.

Income and endowments
All income is recognised once the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of the income receivable can be measured reliably.

Donations and legacies

Donations are recognised when the charity has been notified in writing of both the amount and settlement date. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance by the charity before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that these conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Deferred income

Deferred income represents amounts received for future periods and is released to incoming resources in the period for which, it has been received. Such income is only deferred when:

- The donor specifies that the grant or donation must only be used in future accounting periods; or
- The donor has imposed conditions which must be met before the charity has unconditional entitlement.

Expenditure

All expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to that expenditure, it is probable settlement is required and the amount can be measured reliably. All costs are allocated to the applicable expenditure heading that aggregate similar costs to that category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of resources, with central staff costs allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use. Other support costs are allocated based on the spread of staff costs.

Charitable activities

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Governance costs

These include the costs attributable to the charity's compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements, including audit, strategic management and trustees's meetings and reimbursed expenses.

Taxation

The charity is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation is provided on tangible fixed assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value, over their expected useful economic life as follows:

Asset class	Depreciation method and rate
Equipment	33.33% straight-line

Fund structure

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees' discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Restricted income funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

2 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Donations and legacies;			
Donations from individuals	398	398	995
Trusts and foundations	1,000	1,000	-
	1,398	1,398	995

	Note	Total 2022 £

4 Debtors

	2022 £	2021 £
Trade debtors	14,437	10,512
Other debtors	2,000	-
	16,437	10,512

5 Cash and cash equivalents

	2022 £	2021 £
Cash at bank	204,266	153,258

6 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2022 £	2021 £
Other taxation and social security	3,102	2,932
Accruals	9,505	6,760
Deferred income	17,306	6,500
	29,913	16,192

7 Charity status

The charity is limited by guarantee, incorporated in England and Wales, and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the trustees is liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the charity in the event of liquidation.

8 Funds

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2022 £
Unrestricted			
General			
General unrestricted	279,296	(259,439)	19,857
Total Unrestricted	279,296	(259,439)	19,857
Restricted			
SCVO Epic	18,508	(15,339)	3,169
Culture Recovery Fund	5,016	(45,831)	(40,815)
Esmee Fairbairn	90,000	(29,000)	61,000
Total restricted	113,524	(90,170)	23,354
Total funds	392,820	(349,609)	43,211

9 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Arts Council core grant	146,137	-	146,137	146,137
Arts Council Culture Recovery Fund	-	5,016	5,016	45,140
Local authorities project income	26,335	-	26,335	26,335
Programme projects and production income	22,875	-	22,875	10,000
Fees and shows	48,254	-	48,254	3,075
BFI - Black Country Community Cinema	14,000	-	14,000	7,321
Esmee Fairbairn	-	90,000	90,000	40,000
Sandwell	13,374	-	13,374	3,000
Post Code Lottery	-	-	-	9,063
SCVO	-	18,508	18,508	-
Other income	6,923	-	6,923	9,773
	277,898	113,524	391,422	299,844

10 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net incoming resources for the year include:

	2022 £

11 Staff costs

The monthly average number of persons (including senior management / leadership team) employed by the charity during the year expressed as full time equivalents was as follows:

	2022 No	2021 No
Staff	7	6

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year.

12 Trustees remuneration and expenses

No trustees, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year.

No trustees have received any reimbursed expenses from the charity during the year.

13 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £	2022 £ 2021 £ Total 2021 £
Black Country Cinema cost	9,967	15,339	25,306	22,310
Productions & performances	57,359	29,189	86,548	21,124
Artistic directors	41,746	-	41,746	38,963
Marketing & publicity	1,015	-	1,015	1,100
Travelling & subsistence	537	-	537	10
Salaries & employers NI & pension	101,195	29,000	130,195	81,731
Development	13,000	-	13,000	19,537
Training	50	-	50	464
Insurance	1,762	-	1,762	1,615
Rent	6,293	-	6,293	12,006
Computer/ network	5,325	-	5,325	3,653
Printing, postage & stationery	-	-	-	846
Producers	9,257	16,642	25,899	27,438
Telephone	1,266	-	1,266	1,446
Independent examination	1,700	-	1,700	1,700

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Subscriptions	1,733	-	1,733	1,855
Repairs	3,714	-	3,714	-
Bank charges	244	-	244	200
Other costs	3,275	-	3,275	192
	259,438	90,170	349,608	236,190

14 Taxation

The charity is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation.

BLACK COUNTRY TOURING

England & Wales - Charity number 1080608

Accounts

Annual Report & Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 March 2021

Address:
c/o Bearwood Hub
St Marys C of E Church
St Mary's Road/Bearwood Road
Bearwood
Smethwick
B66 4BX

Charity No: 1080608
Company No: 3446320

BLACK COUNTRY TOURING

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About Black Country Touring

Black Country Touring (BCT) produces and promotes high quality theatre, dance and film in the Black Country, putting local communities at the heart of everything we do.

1) **Promote:** We support local people, youth groups and community venues to choose and promote professional theatre, dance and film for their local community.
2) **Produce:** We create new and unique productions in non-traditional theatre spaces, grown from the stories and experiences of the diverse communities and people of the Black Country.
3) **Participate:** We provide opportunities for young people, volunteers, graduates, and apprentices, supporting the creative talent of the Black Country.

Our Vision

Our vision is of a Black Country where everyone has the opportunity to experience captivating, inspiring and diverse performances in their community, regardless of their background, age or income.

Our Mission

We believe the arts have the potential to change lives by allowing us to see new possibilities, develop new skills and provide opportunities to reflect on our own lives, communities and the wider world.

We work with people across the Black Country to select and present the very best available artists and companies to our local communities.

We endeavour to make our work accessible to, and reflective of, the diverse communities that make up the Black Country.

We collaborate with artists and local people to create new work born out of contemporary Black Country stories for both local and national audiences.

Core Programme

All of BCT's work is focused on creating opportunities for local people to experience theatre, dance and film. They are actively involved in programming, promoting and creating performances, events and festivals. We achieve this through three strands:

- **Community Promoters**: An urban touring network that covers libraries, community centres, museums and galleries, supporting volunteer promoters working in their community to select and promote touring theatre, dance and film;
- **Young Promoters:** Schoolchildren and young people aged from 5 – 18 in mainstream and SEN education transform their school or college into a venue for a touring production, learning the skills required to run a theatre venue;
- **Original Productions:** Site-specific theatre productions that reflect the cultural diversity and the lived experiences of Black Country people - their histories, origins, memories, interests, hopes and aspirations.
- **Community Cinema:** We support local people and venues to bring an immersive cinema experience to their community. The focus is on bringing people together to enjoy the magic of film, programming everything from sing-alongs to documentaries.

Impact of Covid-19 on Black Country Touring's Programme in 2020/21

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic BCT's core programme of live events, productions and projects was on hold for the entirety of 2020/21. The ever-changing and prolonged nature of the pandemic, continued social distancing measures and lockdowns meant the closure of nearly all of the community venues we work with – libraries, community centres, places of worship - the places that bring people together.

Data Collection During 2020/21: Due to Covid-19 and the different ways in which we've been working, we have not been able to collect data in the usual way. This is impacted on the level of audience analysis we are able to conduct. Note that in most instances we have total attendance/ participation numbers and qualitative audience/ participant feedback, but not postcode, ethnicity or quality of experience data.

Chair's Statement

It goes without saying that 2020/21 stands as the most challenging year in BCT's history. At this point, the impact on the arts and culture sector made by Covid-19 is well documented, but it is worth taking a moment to reflect on the particular challenges that Black Country Touring faced this year.

As an organisation that supports an expansive network of community venues, volunteers, schools, artists and theatre companies, we've seen live arts events and activities grind to a standstill in areas where they are needed the most. Places where performances bring our neighbourhoods to life, connect people with one another and illuminate the everyday.

Without BCT, much of this deep-rooted and interconnected network would be at risk of ceasing to exist. So the number one priority of the Board during this time was to ensure the financial security of the organisation. This was enabled by the flexibility and understanding of our current funders, including the **Esmée Fairbairn Foundation**, who made our grant for the year unrestricted, allowing us to weather the storm of uncertainty and make adjustments to our staff structure to continue to effectively deliver our work. **Arts Council England and the DCMS's Culture Recovery Fund** supported a range of activity - much of which was breaking new ground for BCT - and allowed us to connect with our audiences and promoters throughout the pandemic. Financial support from **Creative Black Country** enabled us to realise many of our digital projects this year.

Our local partner **Sandwell Council for Voluntary Service**, whose funding was to support the expansion and deepening engagement of the Community Cinema project in the borough, were flexible and understanding about the challenges the project faced this year. We were also grateful to the **Heart of England Community Foundation** and **Sandwell MBC's Vision 2030** for seeing the social impact and wellbeing benefits of *Dial-A-Story*, and fortunate to have the longstanding support of **Sandwell and Wolverhampton MBCs**, whose funding of our core programmes continued throughout this period. I am also extremely grateful to the BCT team for taking a 3-month reduction in hours and pay to help protect our reserves. Finally, we are grateful to everyone who attended a live performance, listened to a podcast or took part in one of our projects this year and especially to those individuals who also made a donation.

As well as safeguarding the financial future of the organisation, we knew it was vital to maintain connections with our audiences, volunteers and promoters - relationships that have been built and nurtured for many years, which were at risk of being eroded by the prolonged impact of the pandemic. The team reacted with admirable creativity and agility, developing a programme that used new and innovative ways of reaching audiences in the Black Country and beyond. My personal highlight being *Dial A Story*, which in an ever-increasingly digital world – especially during numerous lockdowns – provided those at risk of loneliness and isolation with a chance to engage with artists and enjoy a performance via their phone. It was a project firmly rooted in the pandemic and one that helped demonstrate beyond all doubt, the deep care and understanding that BCT has for its diverse audience.

The pandemic has also caused the Trustees to re-examine the ongoing development of the organisation and its planned changes to its structure. Our pre-Covid trajectory was one focused on growth of ambition and the leadership capacity required to support that vision. 2020/21 has been a year of survival, consolidation and focusing on what is truly essential - irreplaceable - about Black Country Touring. It has upended our development plans to an extent, but has led us to a more sustainable model of growth, with more immediate investment in the delivery capacity of the current team. As the year closed out, I felt we were once again able to stand on a steadier footing and look ahead once more at an ambitious future: one that is rooted in serving our communities better than ever before, supporting artists from diverse backgrounds to develop their practices, and delivering strongly against the strategic outcomes outlined in Arts Council's 10 year vision, *Let's Create.* We know that greater uncertainty and significant challenges may lie ahead, but I feel confident that the creativity and resilience of our team and associates, strong partnerships and our ability to adapt puts us in a strong position for the future.

Tim Rushby

Chair, Black Country Touring Board of Trustees

Building New Connections

Our artistic programme during Covid-19

How do you stay in touch with local audiences and promoters - our very life blood - when the whole country is forced to stay at home and the whole world is reeling from a pandemic?

How do you create performances which still have a meaningful interaction between the performers and the audience in the way that live theatre does when we aren't in the same room? How do you not simply do budget versions of a TV show or film?

Despite the many challenges, 2020-21 proved to be a very busy year for Black Country Touring with the company ensuring that we continued to put local communities and artists at the forefront of all our activity.

This year saw us doing things in a very different way, working on Zoom and using it to present live performance with a live audience, who were able to interact with each other; commissioning theatre makers and sound artists to create podcasts rooted in local stories of the Black Country; taking our community cinema online with different curators taking a lead on the programming and commissioning artists to create digital shorts as part of a West Midlands-wide cultural initiative led by Culture Central. Overall, our programme reached 7,312 people in 2020/21.

With the challenge of so many people not having access to the digital world and often being at risk of isolation and loneliness we also created a strand of work that involved one-to-one phone conversations and bespoke performances between artists and callers. Dial-A-Story was the result, with intimate personal interactions bringing light relief to the many different callers.

Throughout the year we provided a range of support for artists from mentoring to practical support on areas such as fundraising and organisational development. The company has also been on its own journey - along with much of the cultural sector of the West Midlands - as part of More Than A Moment, a regional response to the hard work of the Black Lives Matter movement. This work has and will continue to influence how we move forward across all aspects of the company's work from programming to recruitment, to ensure we

continue to diversify our team, break down systemic barriers and listen to and collaborate with Black creatives and communities.

So it has been quite a year - we have discovered new ways of making work, reached new audiences and worked with many brilliant creative people. The BCT team has been fantastic throughout this rollercoaster journey, embracing new approaches and ongoing change and learning, much of which will continue to inform our way of working for some time to come.

Frances Land & Steve Johnstone

Co-Artistic Directors

"BCT has shown resilience and adaptability to ensure people are still able to connect to their work in a number of meaningful ways. BCT has a strong awareness of their audience and created performance which enabled engagement with different groups, such as ***Dial A Story****; tailormade performances of poetry, music and storytelling delivered into people's homes via telephone.* ***Zoom Café*** *was an adaptation of a live show which took on an even more intimate feel when delivered through an on-line platform.* ***The Sweetshop Murder*** *podcast series featured in Arts Council's Digital Showcase last year and is another example of the high quality work BCT continues to deliver despite facing external constraints."*

- **Jill Brown, Relationship Manager - Touring, Arts Council England**

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Like many working in the arts, we were shocked, saddened and angered by the murder of George Floyd in the US and inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement to examine our own work, organisational structures and unconscious biases.

Black Country Touring has been rated outstanding by Arts Council England for its contribution to the Creative Case for Diversity two years running from 2018-2020. Celebrating the rich cultural diversity of the Black Country and developing a programme that is relevant to, and reflective of, our communities has been at the heart of what we do for almost 25 years. And yet we know we must continue to build on this long standing reputation and do more.

This year we took steps to make diversity, equality, access and inclusion a greater part of everything we do from Board and Company meeting agendas to project plans and fundraising, questioning the actions we take and identifying opportunities to make our work accessible to more communities.

The steps we took in 2020/21 included:

- Formed an Diversity, Equity & Inclusion working group, consisting of Board members and staff to review the organisation's recruitment processes, business plan, programmes and communications, to ensure that lasting and effective strategic changes are implemented;
- Signed up for Culture Central's More Than A Moment pledge to help guide the organisation to being fairer and more equitable. The pledge is the West Midlands Arts sector's promise to take radical, bold and immediate action, to dismantle the systems that have kept Black artists and creatives from achieving their potential in the arts and cultural industries;
- BCT team and trustees taking part in Unconscious Bias training, to better understand how perceptions, decisions and interactions can be guided by inherited or learned bias, often without us realising;

- As part of our commitment to providing employment to artists and creative freelancers through the pandemic, in 2020/21, 47% of the freelancers we worked with were from ethnically diverse backgrounds;[1]
- Although we were not able to gather comprehensive audience data this year, we are committed to working towards our target of 40% of audiences and participants being from ethnically diverse communities by 2023, which has informed the planning and development of future projects in 2020/21.

A Commitment to Local Artists

The pandemic was an extremely challenging time for artists and creative professionals, many of whom work in a freelance capacity in the sector. As an artist-led organisation that works collaboratively with a wide pool of artists, we knew it was vital to create opportunities for regional artists to continue to make work (and get paid to do so). Many of the projects outlined from page 4 onwards were created with this in mind. In total, 13 artists were commissioned to make new work, of which 8 were from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

[1] Source: Arts Council Survey 2020/21 data (+additional data from *A Word in Your Ear* project)

Projects 2020/21

The following projects were all available digitally or via phone to Sandwell residents in 2020/21:

Zoom Cafe

April - June 2020

This adaptation of Jake Oldershaw's cafe piece from 'Back in 10', which explored international tales from the history of tea and coffee. Our main aim was to develop a live, intimate performance that also included a social element for audiences. Audiences were restricted to 12 devices per performance, to help replicate the feel of this show in person.

We worked with our network of existing community promoters including Thimblemill Library in Smethwick.

This helped us to maintain our connection with them during lockdown and for them to continue connecting with local audiences. This work was also presented by several other UK touring schemes.

Total Audience: 389

> *"It was a lovely intimate performance, it felt like Jake was speaking just to me, even though other people were also in the audience!"*
>
> "*Making it feel like a live theatre event with the audience interaction, not just a streamed event that we're seeing so much of."* - **Audience feedback**

Dial-A-Story

September - October 2020

Connecting isolated people with performances via a phone call.

We quickly realised that while online performances are a great way of connecting with audiences at this time, many people without the internet are unable to use these services in the Black Country. These people are some of the most at risk of feeling isolated and lonely during the current crisis. In September, we launched Dial-A-Story, a project that saw three locally based artists converse

and perform 1-to-1 with people via a phone call. Each performance was influenced by the conversation. The project was an opportunity to partner with several charitable organisations - many for the first time - including Sandwell Visually Impaired, Ideal for All, Avery Healthcare and Dudley CVS.

This project was supported by the Heart of England Community Foundation's 'Doing Things Differently' fund, SCVO & Sandwell MBC's Vision 2030 fund and Creative Black Country.

Feedback recorded in artists' diaries:

> *This project is 100% for this man. Incredibly grateful and complimentary and having attended lots of concerts with his late wife he enjoyed reconnecting in this very intimate way. "I feel special because you're singing just for me", "I'm in Pleasureland", "I'm over the moon", "That's given me a little lift (because I'm disabled as well as isolated) and set me up for the day"*

> *Glenda - Amazing force of nature! 3 heart attacks and multiple falls but she's still living independently and sharp and witty as ever. She shared that she'd experienced a lot of family tragedy but also had travelled a lot and even been on a cruise to Norway. When I sang about water she reminisced about throwing dandelion petals into a river to watch them bob along. Best comment of the day: "You're bringing a lot of pleasure to people's homes.*

Total participants: 115

Fred Jeffs: The Sweetshop Murder

October - November 2020

An original podcast investigating the murder of Quinton sweetshop owner, Fred Jeffs, in 1957. Investigated and narrated by his Great-Nephew, Graeme Rose. This series of 7 podcasts saw Rose collaborate with sound artists/musicians Sam Frankie Fox and Ricardo Santos Rocha to create a hybrid of a true crime podcast and theatrical work.

The podcast was very successful, reaching an audience of over 5,500. It is the first podcast commissioned by BCT, following on from Rose's production of the same name in 2019.

Listen via all major podcast platforms or on our website.
Total audience: 4,732

It Gets Lighter From Here
December 2020

BCT commissioned 3 new films for this online digital event that saw cultural organisations across the West Midlands region providing commissions for freelance creatives to develop short films that could be shared via online platforms throughout the shortest day of the year. The artists were Adrian Earle, Sakab Bashir, Sam Frankie Fox & Ricardo Santos Rocha.

Films can be viewed here: https://bctouring.co.uk/it-gets-lighter-from-here-short-films/

Total Audience: 1,052

Sandwell Community Cinema & *Let's Talk Film* Online Festival
Ongoing/ Feb - Mar 2021

Our Community Cinema project was heavily impacted by Covid-19, which meant our planned work with four Sandwell venues and community groups to set up new 'pop-up' neighbourhood cinemas was on hold for this year (funded by SCVO EPIC Fund). We did however launch 'Let's Talk Film', an online mini-festival that featured local programmers, several of which are active in Sandwell:

- Smethwick-born film-maker and visual artist Billy Dosanjh, whose work is often concerned with the post-industrial factory towns of the Black Country and stories of immigration
- Geoff Broadway of the Living Memory project, who selected 4 short films commissioned for that project, that bring to life the stories of local people's photo albums.

6 events were programmed in total with other topics including Women in Cinema, LGBTQ+ short films and Caribbean Film.

We continued to stay in touch with the Sandwell Community Cinemas, providing training online in running a community cinema and planning for a return in Autumn 2021.

Total audience: 341

Spring's Calling: There's a Light at the End of It

March 2021

We commissioned artists Rochi Rampal and Bobbie-Jane Gardner to produce a new audio piece, inspired by the phrase 'Spring's Calling', part of Culture Central's online event celebrating the Spring equinox and focused on the theme of hope. Listen here.

Total audience: 480

Culture Recovery Fund Activity

February - June 2021

BCT secured £50,000 funding from the Arts Council and DCMS fund to enable us to continue to make work during the pandemic. It enabled BCT to continue to commission artists from diverse backgrounds, experiment with new ways of working, support vital community venues and reach audiences while live performances were on hold.

Community Promoter Support

The funding has allowed us to provide additional ongoing support to the following promoters and venues as they plan their return to live programming: Dorothy Parkes Community Centre (Smethwick), CAP Centre (Smethwick), Thimblemill Library (Bearwood), Sandwell Libraries, Caldmore Community Gardens (Walsall), Newhampton Arts Centre (Wolverhampton), Sandwell Parents for Disabled Children, Glasshouse College (Dudley), Penn Hall School (Wolverhampton) and Pens Meadow School (Dudley).

A Word In Your Ear

This project built on the one-to-one telephone format developed for Dial-A-Story (2020) with artists performing for up to 15 individuals belonging to groups from the following Black Country-based organisations: Sandwell Visually Impaired, Thimblemill Bookworms, Willenhall Wombles, Anthem, Just Straight Talk, Ideal For All, Mothership and Bearwood Community Hub.

Using the interaction as inspiration the artists created original poems and songs to give back to the groups. This includes remote digital performances, something printed they can hold onto and something tactile for two visually impaired groups, made by designer Abigail King.

We are currently working with the artists to edit and release the songs, poems and stories as a podcast series in Autumn 2021.

A total of 69 people participated.

Sector Support

Black Country Touring's role as a key organisation in the arts ecology of the Black Country was arguably more important than ever in 2020/21, due to the impact of the pandemic. It was vital that the sector kept in regular communication and shared knowledge, insights and challenges. We looked to support our wide and diverse network of partners through this difficult time.

BCT is a member of the following strategic regional and national groups, initiatives and partnership projects:

- **Partnership Board for Creative Black Country:** the region's Creative People and Places project. Support was provided to CBC as they applied for National Portfolio status and with the formation of a Black Country Funding Network, which brings together fundraisers across the region to share, network and learn from one another;
- **Culture Central and Culture Response Unit**: stay informed about the wider sector's response to Covid-19, including lobbying central government and feeding into reports on the challenges faced by the West Midlands arts industry;
- **Sandwell Cultural Leaders:** Frances Land, Co-Artistic Director, attended these meetings around future cultural activity in Sandwell with the Commonwealth games as a major event to trigger future investment and activity;
- **Wolverhampton & Walsall Culture Compacts**: the Compacts are strategic cross sector partnerships driven by culture's contribution to social and economic development, bringing together the local authority, university, college, businesses, leisure sector, city developers,

cultural and creative organisations, health sector, community representatives, and voluntary sector to co-design and deliver a vision for culture in the city;

- **Sandwell Networkers Group**: BCT staff members attend monthly meetings to share opportunities and keep linked in with other attendees;
- **Sandwell Borough of Sanctuary**: regular attendance at meetings supporting refugees and asylum seekers in the borough;
- **National Rural Touring Forum**
- **Wednesbury Heritage Action Zone**: BCT was part of a consortium led by Multistory to develop a three year programme of activity focused on Wednesbury Town Centre (further details to follow in 2021/22
- **Spirit of 2012**: led by Creative Black Country, this project will culminate as part of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games programme. The project focuses on the professional development of Deaf Theatre Maker/performers and work with both Deaf and hearing participants and audiences.

Queen's Award For Voluntary Service

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

BCT was officially awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in June 2020. It was a powerful reminder of how important our volunteers and community venues are to our success, at a time when we were unable to work together on live events. The award recognises outstanding work by volunteer groups for the benefit of their local communities and is the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK.

One of our volunteers, a member of Friends of Thimblemill Library, gave the following feedback in support of the award:

> *"I feel that without being able to attend Black Country touring events and performances our community would lose something very special, the amount of people who turn out for each performance speaks for itself. They have proven very popular indeed, I hope they will continue to do so for many years to come, they are a real asset to anyone who sees them."*

Organisational Development

The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation's (EFF) decision to make the first year of three years grant funding (granted

September 2020) unrestricted gave BCT the flexibility and financial buffer required to navigate challenging and evolving circumstances. The funding was originally allocated for the recruitment of an Executive Director.

BCT's Covid Recovery Group, featuring Trustees and management, identified how this funding could be used to continue to develop the organisation without the recruitment of a new role. The capacity of the existing team was expanded to realise this. We are able to do this in part due to the evolution of the team since the application to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, with new members of staff capable of delivering the realising the organisation and vision, but lacking the necessary capacity.

The following changes were implemented from January - March, a process that will continue into 2021/22:

Development Manager: Increase from 0.6 to 0.8 FTE to provide more support with financial management, strategic development, business planning while maintaining existing levels of fundraising activity.

Company Manager: this role is taking on greater responsibility for Finance and HR, including payroll, invoices and reporting - while also crossing over with the Development Manager where required, particularly around cashflow, grants and evaluation. The Company Manager will also take over the appraisals for the roles they line-manage and lead on HR for the company.

Communications & Admin Coordinator and Admin & Projects Assistant: The Admin & Projects Assistant role has evolved from the Business Support Apprenticeship, achieving significant development for the current holder of the role. An increase in capacity from this role allowed the Communications & Admin Coordinator to focus on marketing, communications and the development of our social media presence, which was highlighted as a vital area for development in the 2018 Organisational Review and subsequent bid to EFF.

As well as enabling an increase in capacity now, these proposed changes moved us towards a longer-term vision of a sustainable staff structure drawing on recommendations from the indpeendent 2018 Organisational Development report.

Additional Funding Secured in 2020/21

In addition to regular core funding from Arts Council England, Sandwell MBC and Wolverhampton MBC, Black Country Touring secured the following funding in 2020/21. We are extremely grateful to all of our donors during this particularly challenging year.

Funder	Amount	Notes
Arts Council England & DCMS: Culture Recovery Fund	£50,156	Activity crossed over into 2021/22
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation	£40,000	Year 1 of 3 year funding period
Heart of England Community Foundation	£3,000	For Dial-A-Story
Sandwell Vision 2030	£2,687	For Dial-A-Story
SCVO Epic Fund	£18,508	For Sandwell Community Cinema
Film Hub Midlands	£9,288	For Let's Talk Film
Individual Giving donations	£995	
Total:	**£124,634**	

BLACK COUNTRY TOURING

Charity Information

Trustees

Timothy Rushby, Chair
Imtiaz Dungarwalla, Vice Chair
Elizabeth Lawal
Akilla McLean
Julie McKirdy
Hitesh Patel
Carla Priddon
Paul Reece
Kayleigh Talbot

Black Country Touring Team

Frances Land, Co-Artistic Director
Steve Johnstone, Co-Artistic Director
Matt Andrews, Development Manager
Deb Justice, Company Manager
Natalie Kidman, Promoter Manager
Bobby Tiwana, Producer
Joanne Blunt, Admin & Communications Coordinator
Olivia James, Community Cinema Coordinator
Donna Clarkson, Project Support Assistant

Keep in Touch

@BCT_Touring
bct.touring
@BCT_Touring
bctouring.co.uk

Company registration number: 3446320

Charity registration number: 1080608

Black Country Touring

(A company limited by guarantee)

Annual Report and Financial Statements

for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

Bissell & Brown Birmingham Limited
12 Portman Rd, Kings Heath
56 High Street
Birmingham
B13 0SL

Black Country Touring

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Black Country Touring

Reference and Administrative Details

Trustees	Timothy Rushby Imtiaz Dungarwalla Carla Priddon Julie McKirdy Paul Reece Hitesh Patel Akila Mclean Kayleigh Talbot Elizabeth Lawal
Principal Office	Bearwood Hub St Marys C of E Church St Mary's Rd/ Bearwood Rd Bearwood, Smethwick B66 4BX
Registered Office	Bearwood Hub St Marys C of E Church St Mary's Rd/ Bearwood Rd Bearwood, Smethwick B66 4BX
	The charity is incorporated in England and Wales.
Company Registration Number	3446320
Charity Registration Number	1080608
Bankers	The Co-operative Bank
Independent Examiner	Bissell & Brown Birmingham Limited 12 Portman Rd, Kings Heath 56 High Street Birmingham B13 0SL

Black Country Touring

Trustees' Report

The trustees, who are directors for the purposes of company law, present the annual report together with the financial statements of the charitable company for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Trustees

Timothy Rushby

Imtiaz Dungarwalla

Carla Priddon

Julie McKirdy

Paul Reece

Hitesh Patel

Akila Mclean

Kayleigh Talbot

Elizabeth Lawal

Structure, governance and management

Nature of governing document

The company is limited by guarantee and does not have a share capital. It is governed by Memorandum and Articles of Association and was incorporated on 8th October 1997. It was registered as a Charity on 8th May 2000.

Organisational structure

Chief Executives : Steve Johnstone & Frances Johnstone

Company Secretary Frances Johnstone

Personnel

There were no personnel changes this year:

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

Recruitment and Appointment of New Trustees
1 Members of the Committee will be invited on the basis of their working expertise and experience, and/or their background and other experiences and skills. The committee as a whole will aim to reflect the broad make-up and cultural diversity of the Black Country and the West Midlands.

2 As a general rule, there should be a relationship between the Company and a person proposed for Committee membership. The person proposed should know something of Black Country Touring's work. This criterion does not apply to people offering specific skills.

3 The time limits for membership laid down in the constitution should be applied consciously, rather than renewing automatically.

4 There should be a provision for new members to be brought on for a fixed term of one or two years in the first instance, with the possibility of extension to full membership, after review. (Co-options for specific projects or developments are already laid down in the constitution)

In applying these criteria Black Country Touring will take a pro-active approach in fully operating its policy of equal opportunities.

Trustees' Report

Induction and training of trustees

All proposed new members must be provided with an induction pack and have a formal discussion with a member of the Company's staff, before their final approval by the Committee.

These guidelines run alongside the terms of Black Country Touring's Articles of Association.

Objectives and activities

Public benefit

In the exercise of their powers as charity trustees, they have had due regard to the published guidance from the Charity Commission on the operation of the public benefit requirement, and the aims of the charity are carried out for the public benefit.

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the requirements of section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

Objects and aims

The objects of the Company are to promote, maintain, improve and advance the education of the public by the encouragement and practice of the arts, by fostering and promoting for the benefit of the public the improvement and development of artistic knowledge, taste, understanding, and application of the arts and in particular but not exclusively, to provide arts based activities and encourage participation by all sections of the community in such activities in the Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley and Sandwell Metropolitan Boroughs and their environs.

Achievements and performance

See Annual Review

Financial review

See Annual Review

Policy on reserves

The income and expenditure of the charity fluctuates according to the pattern of grant and project income secured. As the Charity employs a number of staff, the Management Committee (Trustees) consider that reserves are needed to provide for an orderly wind-down in the event of an unexpected reduction in the funds secured. The Charity is also required on occasion to incur the costs of developing and researching work before the grants which have been awarded, and other income, are actually received. The Charity therefore needs a level of reserves for cash flow reasons. In the opinion of the Management Committee the reserves of the Charity are appropriate for its scale of operation.

The annual report was approved by the trustees of the charity on 12/11/21 and signed on its behalf by:

Timothy Rushby
Trustee

Black Country Touring

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

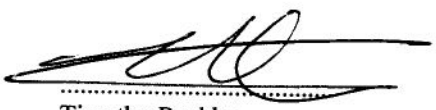
The trustees (who are also the directors of Black Country Touring for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with the United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are 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.

Approved by the trustees of the charity on 12/11/20 and signed on its behalf by:



Timothy Rushby
Trustee

Black Country Touring

Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of Black Country Touring

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2021 which are set out on pages 6 to 13.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

As the charity's trustees of Black Country Touring (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of Black Country Touring are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since Black Country Touring's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of Bissell & Brown Birmingham Ltd, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of Black Country Touring as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act 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
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities [applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)].

I have no concerns and 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.

.....

B J Matthews, FCA
Bissell & Brown Birmingham Ltd
12 Portman Rd, Kings Heath
56 High Street
Birmingham
B13 0SL

Date:....12./11./21.

Black Country Touring

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2021 (Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Income and Endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	2	995	-	995	2,051
Charitable activities	3	214,704	85,140	299,844	351,640
Total Income		215,699	85,140	300,839	353,691
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	4	(208,172)	(28,018)	(236,190)	(341,594)
Total Expenditure		(208,172)	(28,018)	(236,190)	(341,594)
Net income		7,527	57,122	64,649	12,097
Net movement in funds		7,527	57,122	64,649	12,097
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		65,421	17,508	82,929	70,832
Total funds carried forward	13	72,948	74,630	147,578	82,929

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

The notes on pages 8 to 13 form an integral part of these financial statements.

Black Country Touring

(Registration number: 3446320)
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2021

	Note	2021 £	2020 £
Current assets			
Debtors	9	10,512	11,179
Cash at bank and in hand	10	153,258	86,045
		163,770	97,224
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	11	(16,192)	(14,295)
Net assets		147,578	82,929
Funds of the charity:			
Restricted income funds			
Restricted funds	13	74,630	17,508
Unrestricted income funds			
Unrestricted funds		72,948	65,421
Total funds	13	147,578	82,929

For the financial year ending 31 March 2021 the charity was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the charity to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476; and
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

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

The financial statements on pages 6 to 13 were approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue on 12/11/21 and signed on their behalf by:

.....
Timothy Rushby
Trustee

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

1 Accounting policies

Summary of significant accounting policies and key accounting estimates
The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

Statement of compliance
The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with 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) (effective 1 January 2015) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102). They also comply with the Companies Act 2006 and Charities Act 2011.

Basis of preparation
Black Country Touring meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

Going concern
The Trustees have considered budgets and cash flow forecasts through to October 2021, and the level of post year-end support received from Arts Council England. On this basis, the trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern nor any significant areas of uncertainty that affect the carrying value of assets held by the charity.

Exemption from preparing a cash flow statement
The charity opted to early adopt Bulletin 1 published on 2 February 2016 and have therefore not included a cash flow statement in these financial statements.

Income and endowments
All income is recognised once the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of the income receivable can be measured reliably.

Donations and legacies

Donations are recognised when the charity has been notified in writing of both the amount and settlement date. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance by the charity before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that these conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Deferred income

Deferred income represents amounts received for future periods and is released to incoming resources in the period for which, it has been received. Such income is only deferred when:

- The donor specifies that the grant or donation must only be used in future accounting periods; or
- The donor has imposed conditions which must be met before the charity has unconditional entitlement.

Expenditure

All expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to that expenditure, it is probable settlement is required and the amount can be measured reliably. All costs are allocated to the applicable expenditure heading that aggregate similar costs to that category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of resources, with central staff costs allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use. Other support costs are allocated based on the spread of staff costs.

Charitable activities

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Governance costs

These include the costs attributable to the charity's compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements, including audit, strategic management and trustees's meetings and reimbursed expenses.

Taxation

The charity is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation is provided on tangible fixed assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value, over their expected useful economic life as follows:

Asset class	Depreciation method and rate
Equipment	33.33% straight-line

Fund structure

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees' discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Restricted income funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

2 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total funds £
Donations and legacies;		
Donations from individuals	995	995
Total for 2021	995	995
Total for 2020	2,051	2,051

3 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £
Arts Council core grant	146,137	-	146,137
Arts Council Culture Recovery Fund	-	45,140	45,140
Local authorities project income	26,335	-	26,335
Programme projects and production income	10,000	-	10,000
Fees and shows	3,075	-	3,075
BFI - Black Country Community Cinema	7,321	-	7,321
Esmee Fairbairn	-	40,000	40,000
Heart of England	3,000	-	3,000
Post Code Lottery	9,063	-	9,063
Other income	9,773	-	9,773
	214,704	85,140	299,844

4 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Black Country Cinema cost	6,617	15,693	22,310	22,176
Productions & performances	8,799	12,325	21,124	108,559
Artistic directors	38,963	-	38,963	41,747
Marketing & publicity	1,100	-	1,100	4,717
Travelling & subsistence	10	-	10	3,502
Salaries & employers NI & pension	81,731	-	81,731	85,766
Development	19,537	-	19,537	20,928
Training	464	-	464	1,675
Insurance	1,615	-	1,615	1,710
Rent	12,006	-	12,006	12,006
Computer/ network	3,653	-	3,653	4,430
Printing, postage & stationery	846	-	846	3,152

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Producers	27,438	-	27,438	22,489
Telephone	1,446	-	1,446	1,817
Independent examination	1,700	-	1,700	1,500
Subscriptions	1,855	-	1,855	1,047
Fund-raising consultant	-	-	-	(2,100)
Bank charges	200	-	200	180
Other costs	192	-	192	5,399
Depreciation	-	-	-	894
	208,172	28,018	236,190	341,594

5 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net incoming resources for the year include:

	2021 £	2020 £
Depreciation	-	894

6 Trustees remuneration and expenses

No trustees, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year.

No trustees have received any reimbursed expenses from the charity during the year.

7 Staff costs

The monthly average number of persons (including senior management team) employed by the charity during the year expressed as full time equivalents was as follows:

	2021 No	2020 No
Staff	6	6

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year.

8 Taxation

The charity is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation.

9 Debtors

	2021 £	2020 £
Trade debtors	10,512	5,509
Prepayments	-	2,669
Other debtors	-	3,001
	10,512	11,179

10 Cash and cash equivalents

	2021 £	2020 £
Cash at bank	153,258	86,045

11 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2021 £	2020 £
Other taxation and social security	2,932	2,432
Accruals	6,760	2,800
Deferred income	6,500	9,063
	16,192	14,295

12 Charity status

The charity is limited by guarantee, incorporated in England and Wales, and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the trustees is liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the charity in the event of liquidation.

The principal place of business is:
Bearwood Hub
St Marys C of E Church
St Mary's Rd/ Bearwood Rd
Bearwood, Smethwick
B66 4BX

13 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2020 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2021 £
Unrestricted				
General				
General unrestricted	50,249	215,699	(208,172)	57,776
Designated				
Development reserve	15,172	-	-	15,172
Total Unrestricted	65,421	215,699	(208,172)	72,948
Restricted				
SCVO Epic	17,508	-	(15,693)	1,815
Culture Recovery Fund	-	45,140	(4,325)	40,815
Esmee Fairbairn	-	40,000	(8,000)	32,000
Total restricted	17,508	85,140	(28,018)	74,630
Total funds	82,929	300,839	(236,190)	147,578