



highlights

rural touring scheme

Annual Report

2024-2025

Highlights is supported by:



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



ORGANISATIONAL STATEMENT

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VISION

Highlights will present vibrant, entertaining and thought-provoking cultural activities to enrich the lives of people in rural communities across the north of England.

MISSION

Highlights connects artists and audiences through inspirational and entertaining shared cultural experiences. To achieve this we will

Engage with a diverse range of artists, companies and creative practitioners.

Support a network of grassroots volunteers to programme varied creative events in village halls and community spaces in Cumbria, County Durham and Northumberland and help them provide great social occasions.

Prioritise communities who have limited access to professional cultural work.

Expand the network, giving greater access to the work and increasing the profile of rural touring across the north of England.

Work with schools and community groups to deliver events and participatory activities.

VALUES

Highlights aims to be fair minded, kind, open, collaborative and inclusive. To achieve this we will

Nurture and support our staff, artists, promoters, volunteers and audiences.

Be responsive, with a 'can do' but pragmatic approach to our work.

Consider the environmental impact of all our activities.



Love It If We Beat Them, Emmerson & Ward

The financial year of 2024/2025 has seen Highlights work hard to deliver events across the region, collaborating with venues to celebrate the local and affordable nature of arts events on the doorstep.

It has been the second year of a 3-year National Portfolio agreement with Arts Council of England (ACE). In January 2024, ACE announced that the 3-year NPO agreement would be extended by one year until April 2027. The NPO agreement is awarded to Highlights and Arts Out West consortium, with Highlights as the lead partner.

Local authority funding from Cumbria and South Lakeland (now via Westmorland & Furness) and Northumberland remained at a standstill amount. Unfortunately we were not funded by County Durham this financial year, and conversations with the local authority remain ongoing for 2025-2026.

In early summer our Creative Engagement Officer, Kate Halsall, handed her notice in. Kate left in August having been at Highlights for just over five years and having built our extensive schools and workshops programme. In September we recruited for a new role, Community Programmer, which looks after our schools and community workshop programme, libraries work and Creative Highlights workshops.

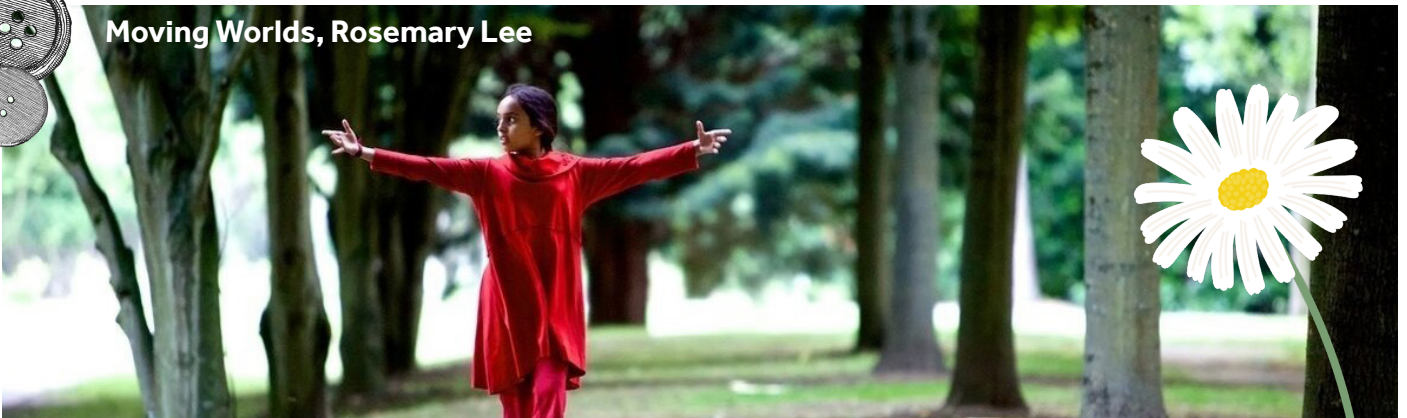
Our General Manager, Kath Wood, retired in December. After a period of recruitment in Autumn, Jo Cottrell started as General Manager in early January.


Highlights continued to work in partnership with over 70 village halls, community centres, libraries and schools across Cumbria, County Durham and Northumberland, programming performances and arts & crafts workshops alongside schools and community creative workshops.

All of our events, whether for public or for schools, are programmed in the same way. Highlights staff curate a menu of options and the venues, schools or libraries select the events that they want to host in their community, ensuring a truly collaborative approach to programming.




Moving Worlds, Rosemary Lee





Fault Lines, Lila Dance



We delivered events in 84 rural communities.

We delivered 145 performances across 64 venues, working with 36 companies and resulting in audience numbers of 5891 of which 265 were children and young people.

We delivered 39 Creative Highlights arts and crafts workshops in 26 venues. We worked with five regional artists and had 361 participants. Two workshops were cancelled due to lack of ticket sales, one workshop was cancelled due to bad weather.

We delivered 3 performances in 2 Northumberland libraries, working with 3 artists and resulting in audience numbers of 112.

Total box office income was £79,058 of which 58% was via online sales. Across the two seasons, £25,154 was returned to Highlights, meaning that venues retained £9,466.

The value of volunteer contributions equates to approx. £45,510. This is calculated at an estimated 669 volunteers giving a total of 3034 hours @ £15 per hour (an accepted, if modest, 'skilled volunteer' hourly rate).

We worked with 24 schools and 4 community groups through our Participate programme; delivering 60 events from 17 artists/companies to 2010 participants.

We delivered 4 in person and 1 online promoter training sessions in May 2025 and 6 online promoter drop-in events in October 2024.

We continued our work as a partner in the Rural Touring Dance Initiative, joining The Place, NRTF, Take Art and Sonia Sabri Company in leading the current round of this national programme, funded by Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Arts Council England.

Highlights continued work on our Investors in the Environment accreditation, with the aim of receiving the Silver award in 2025.

We continued our artist development work alongside regional partners such as Northern Consortium of Rural Touring Schemes, North East Exchange, Venues North as well as international partners Atlantic Presenters Association, Canadian Folk Music Awards and Music PEI.

2024 - 2025 showcased as broad a range of performances as ever, with theatre, music, storytelling, family work and a digital dance presentation from the latest iteration of the Rural Touring Dance Initiative.

We were delighted to welcome gypsy and swing band Christine Tassan et Les Imposteures to the UK, the culmination of five years of planning interrupted by the pandemic. Highlights co-ordinated a 15 date tour across the UK rural touring network and hosted two performances in County Durham and Northumberland. Other Canadian artists during 2024-2025 included Allison Lupton, Shane Cook and Kyle Waymouth; Rum Ragged and Rube & Rake. All of these artists came to us thanks to our connection with Atlantic Presenters Association and their showcase event Contact East.

Closer to home, we were delighted to present Emmerson & Ward's Love It If We Beat Them – a production which we had followed from its first shared reading at Live Theatre rehearsal rooms in 2021. Steeped in the football and politics of the North East, we received some fantastic reviews for the writing, the acting and the transformation of our village halls into authentic social clubs complete with a full size pool table. Other regional companies have included Carole W Productions' Limelight and Frogna & Fox; Black Liver and Katie Doherty and the Navigators.

Across the year, we have seen inconsistent ticket sales – with certain performances and venues not seeing the box office returns we would have expected, despite audience feedback being overwhelmingly positive. This coupled with the recent increases in artist fees means that we have spent time during the latter part of the year reviewing our offer to ensure the performance programme remains sustainable for the future.





"It was like going to the theatre, without the need to drive. I loved it, the show was meaningful and the actors were superb. It actually made me think about my own life and what I can resolve. I also met new people and got invited to join a dance group, in the same venue, so I felt closer and excited to make new friends and connect into a new community, after moving." - **Audience feedback about Elysium Theatre's The Moth, St Thomas Church Hall, Stanhope**

"Wow! The audience said the best Highlights ever. We had two adults with dementia from Appleby memory club and several widows in their eighties. A well-rounded representation from our community. Truly thrilled with our guest musicians and the audience response. Thank you to the team." - **Tina, Promoter at Murton Village Institute, Cumbria about Allison Lupton, Shane Cooke and Kyle Waymouth**

"Unbelievably lucky to have a show of such high standard to come to our village. It allowed me to give my son an experience he wouldn't get without your charity. The show was amazing and fun for me too. He is 12 months old but was fully engaged and interacted with the cast and tasks. I love that he was able to see a performance and learn about the environment in a fun way." - **Audience member at Gilsland Village Hall about Jam Jar Theatre's Penguins**

"Thank you for your welcome and providing such wonderful hospitality. What you offer is all that's good about rural touring for travelling players, a warm welcome, generous audiences, well-loved venues." - **Carole Wears of Carole W Productions**

"Our heartfelt thanks for choosing little old Arnside to host this sophisticated and emotional piece of top flight drama. Rural touring at the absolute top of its game. It was an emotional night with some audience members moved to tears by the private dramas revealed in the second act. Everyone loved the transformation of our venue into an intimate social club. No-one was taking the easy route when it came to stage design for this tour. The attention to detail from Rob the writer (what a modest man he is, rolling his sleeves up to move gear in and out), Alison, PJ and Camilla paid such dividends in terms of audience belief. We were in that club before the house lights were even down. This show really did personify that intimacy of rural touring that Kate summed up so well in her 6 Music spot." - **Debbie, Promoter at Arnside Educational Institute**



CREATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

Creative Highlights is a series of arts and crafts workshops delivered by regional artists in village halls and community spaces. For 2024-2025 Highlights continued to programme Creative Highlights events in both seasons.

In planning of the programme, we now try to schedule workshops on a tour basis, scheduling the same artist in several locations within one county, over a shorter time span, to ensure that we fulfil our objectives regarding sustainability and our impact on the environment.

During the year we worked with five regional artists: Carrie Dennison of Crafts for Wellbeing (County Durham), Jessica Kinnersley (Northumberland), Claire Priestley of Teesdale Felt (County Durham), Julie Evans Printmaker (Lancashire) and Steve Pardue (Northumberland). We offered workshops in lino printing, metal embossing, wet felting, needle felting, Provincetown white line printing and nature journalling. The workshops were all half-day and provided a valuable social occasion as well as a chance to learn a new skill.

The workshops programme continues to be well received by participants, although audiences are now more difficult to reach, and some consideration and development of the programme is required to ensure we can continue to offer excellent quality workshops of interest to venues and audiences alike.

"The event was very well organised and extremely enjoyable. Carrie is an excellent teacher and her knowledge and creativity ensured that the session was focussed, well structured and productive. I hope that she comes to do further workshops at Arnside." - **Participant at a Metal Embossing workshop, Arnside Educational Institute**

"Absolutely brilliant! I loved learning a new skill with different techniques. Claire was super helpful. Very patient with great ideas to improve our work. What a wonderful day". - **Participant at a Wet Felting Landscape workshop, Mickleton Village Hall**

"Thank you so much for pushing me right out of my comfort zone on your 'Nature Journalling Workshop'. I've loved completing it over the last week or so and will now turn over and fill the other side with the walk I did after the workshop, beyond Barningham village." - **Participant at a Nature Journalling workshop, Barningham Village Hall**

Our work with schools and community groups has continued in 2024-2025. We have an impressive portfolio of artists and practitioners, and we work with artists from our performance menu as well as engaging artists specifically to deliver this work.

We completed our work on Rural Young Creatives, the final year of a three-year project working with a portfolio of seven artists based in the north of England with under-represented protected characteristics. Workshops were delivered in schools in rurally isolated communities, specifically targeting children and young people with lower levels of arts engagement. This project received funding from Eden District Council (now Westmorland & Furness), James Knott Foundation, Cumbria Community Foundation and Tyne & Wear Community Foundation. Many of these artists remain on our menu of workshops for future programming.

In March 2025 we took part in a Big Give Arts for Impact fundraising campaign, raising money to provide young people in rural areas the chance to explore their creativity through free arts workshops in their secondary schools. We hope these experiences will open doors to new career possibilities and inspire the next generation of artists, audiences and volunteer promoters. The campaign raised £3,930 excluding gift aid, bringing us to 98% of our target.

WORKSHOPS DELIVERED:

Gav Cross - storytelling

Indigo Moon Theatre

Jam Jar Theatre

Kate Gregson - theatre production

Kate Halsall - music

Georgia Hill - puppetry

Aileen Kelly - props & costume

Virpi Kettu - animation

Let's Circus - circus skills

Life & Limb - puppetry

Rowan McCabe - poetry

Meta 4 Dance - dance

Maddie Morris - music

Moving Parts Arts - puppetry

Supriya Nagarajan - music raga

Kema Sikazwe - music

Robin Webb - animation





CASE STUDY

Crosby Ravensworth Primary School is a small but wonderful school in the heart of Cumbria. The village has a population of approximately 500 people, with 29 children attending the school.

In October 2024, rapper and actor Kema Sikazwe ran a music workshop for the whole school, helping the pupils to craft their own lyrics and rhymes about their school. Kema is a Zambian-British performer and has written extensively about his experiences of growing up in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, having arrived in the country at the age of three. In an interview with NARC Mag he shared that: "I've been chased and I've been jumped, just because of my skin colour, so I never felt like I belonged there."

In the 2011 census, Crosby Ravensworth was 99.6% white, with one resident in the area of African heritage. For the pupils at Crosby Ravensworth, then, it was very significant for Kema to deliver a workshop in their school - not only because of the great fun they had experiencing a new art form, but also because it introduced them to a young, male role model from a different background.

CRPS headteacher, Duncan Priestley, shared that the pupils, *"really enjoyed meeting Kema - that's hugely important given the lack of diversity in our community."* The feedback from the children was fantastic, and Duncan added that the workshop was, *"fun, fast, all got involved in the session. It was well led and had a great end product."* He said that the pupils enjoyed, *"making the rap about their school with their own contributions,"* and that they, *"probably would have liked it to have lasted longer!"*

A video that Duncan created of the workshop can be found on the CRPS website: <https://www.crosbyravensworth.cumbria.sch.uk/our-videos>



We have continued our work with promoters, offering regular in person and online training opportunities and supporting them with marketing and promotion of their events.

We have had some very successful in person season launch events, with venues enjoying networking opportunities. We continue to offer online events as an option for those who find this more convenient..

We have been able to attract new venues to the scheme across all areas.

New venues in 2024-2025 are Blanchland Abbey and Newbrough Town Hall, Northumberland; Burnhope Community Centre and Coundon & Leeholme Community Centre, County Durham; Penruddock Village Hall and Stainton Village Hall, Cumbria.

We welcomed three venues who were previously with Arts Out West to the scheme, after the local authority reorganisation. Gleaston Village Hall, Ireleth Temperance Hall and Rampside Village Hall are now regularly booking events.



Dufton Village Hall, Westmorland & Furness

RURAL TOURING DANCE INITIATIVE

Rural Touring Dance Initiative (RTDI) is a national project which supports dance artists and rural promoters to make great dance performance events happen in rural spaces.

Highlights is proud to be one of five cultural partners who collectively make up RTDI. In July 2022 the current partners (The Place, Highlights, National Rural Touring Forum, Sonia Sabri Company and Take Art) were awarded £400,000 from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and £450,000 from Arts Council England for 2023 – 2026. As well as supporting up to 10 new Associate Venues to programme dance in rural areas and market towns, many of them in Levelling Up for Culture places, the funding enables RTDI to support eight dance artists and companies per year to tour their work to rural areas, delivering over 200 performances and 90 workshops between autumn 2023 and summer 2026.

Since January 2023 Highlights has hosted one of the three regional RTDI Coordinators, Susan Coffer, who helps to deliver more high-quality dance to the network of village halls and market town venues in the north of England and Scotland, from Aberdeenshire to Cheshire.

In March 2025, Highlights hosted a residency with Pagrav Dance and Britten Sinfonia to support the development of a new piece of work. This was based at The Maltings Berwick and included a workshop with the Memory Laners' Music Group, a regular community group for people with dementia and their carers and a sharing of excerpts to the general public and invited guests.

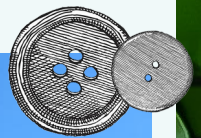




ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Highlights acknowledge that our work has an effect on the environment and has identified key aspects that could contribute to our carbon footprint and other negative impacts.

As a staff, we have committed to the Investors in the Environment (IIE) accreditation process, achieving bronze in Autumn 2023 and working towards our silver. Rural Touring has significantly better green credentials than its town or city equivalent. A study by Take Art and the National Rural Touring Forum found that rural performances produce 57% less carbon emissions per audience member than city equivalents, with distances travelled being much lower as well as the emissions produced by the venues. Partnering with small-scale multi-purpose community spaces, we bring art closer to the doorstep of audiences.



Members of the Highlights team volunteering at Eden Rivers Trust, Penrith

We do acknowledge that our work has an impact on the environment, and we have identified key aspects that could contribute to our carbon footprint. To support our aspirations, we are proud to be members of Investors in the Environment and in the year 2024-25, held the Bronze Award for our commitment to improving our green credentials.

OFFICE

2024-25 was our first full year in our new office in Brough. It is a purpose-built low-impact building with energy-efficient heating and lighting. Despite using the space more than we used to use the old office in Penrith, our annual electricity use has reduced by over 2000kwh. We are also pleased to have switched to Octopus Energy, which supplies 100% renewable energy. We furnished the office with second-hand furniture and use environmentally friendly cleaning products. Our office toilet is twinned with a toilet in Uganda - Toilet Twinning is a charity which funds hygiene education via community-led workshops and sources local materials for families and communities to build their own toilets.

PROGRAMMING

As part of our commitment to engage the community with the importance of sustainability, Highlights programmes work with environmental themes. In the year 2024-25, Penguins, Polaris and A Shortcut to Nature Journalling were programmed in community spaces and schools.

VENUES

Many of the venues we partner with are working hard to make their spaces more sustainable, and we use our website to showcase their environmental stories – including the installation of solar panels, heat pumps and electric charging stations.

PRINT

We use two local suppliers to print our marketing materials – HH Reeds in Penrith and Cerberus, Kirkby Stephen. Both suppliers are partnered with the Woodland Trust Carbon Capture scheme and source environmentally friendly materials for print and use carbon neutral web hosting. Reeds were the first company in Cumbria to achieve the international and independent ISO 14001 certification for environmental management, putting them in the top 300 energy efficient companies in the UK. In the year 2024-25 we significantly reduced the amount of print we require by redesigning our brochure to use half the paper, and printed a smaller number.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

We have partnered with Eden Rivers Trust and have committed to volunteer at their tree nursery twice a year. In September 2024, four members of staff spent an afternoon removing seeds from rowan berries taken from native rowan trees in Swindale and potting them ready to be germinated over the winter. The new saplings will be planted back on the riverside in Swindale, supporting the local ecosystem. In January 2025, three members of staff and one trustee returned to the tree nursery and spent the afternoon potting tiny hawthorn trees, native to the area, and helping with landscaping.





ORGANISATIONAL UPDATE

GOVERNANCE

The Board of Trustees started the year with eight members and ended the year with seven members. Robert Burns resigned in December 2024.

During the year, the trustees undertook a skills analysis to ensure the board collectively had both the breadth and depth of necessary skills and experience.

Further recruitment will take place in 2025-2026.

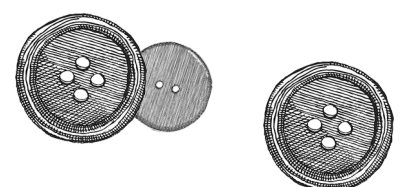
ACCOUNTANTS

Jane Ascroft from Barnard Castle remains our accountant and Independent Auditor.

TRAINING

Individual trustees attended training on-

- Equality, Diversity & inclusion
- Environmental practices
- Community Engagement
- Protecting Your Charity's Finances
- Cyber Security for Small Charities



STAFF

Kate Halsall, Creative Engagement Officer, left Highlights in August after 5 years working on our schools and workshop programme. Kath Wood, General Manager, retired in December.

During the year we recruited two new members of staff. Joel Phillimore joined as Community Programmer in September, and Jo Cottrell joined as General Manager in January.

STAFF TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

NRTF Conference (Kate Lynch, Dawn Foster, Susan Coffey)

Anti Racism Cumbria

WOMEX

Manchester Folk Festival

GDPR and Cyber Security

Canada Folk Music Awards

Showcase PEI

COLLABORATORS

During 2023-24, Highlights has maintained many partnerships and introduced new collaborations. Partnerships include:

Arts Out West

National Rural Touring Forum

Rural Touring Dance Initiative

– The Place, Take Art, NRTF, Sonia Sabri Company

Northern Consortium of Rural Touring Schemes

Northumberland Library Services

Atlantic Presenters Association

Music PEI

Canada Folk Music Awards

Sound Roots UK

COMPANY DETAILS

Registered Office: Market Cross Cabin, New Road, Brough CA17 4AS

Phone number: 01768 353954

Registered charity no. 1100920

Company Limited by Guarantee no. 4646007



LIST OF VENUES

CUMBRIA:

Alston Town Hall; Appleby HUB/Appleby Public Hall; Armathwaite Old School Hall; Arnside Educational Institute; Askham & Helton Community Centre; Burgh by Sands Village Hall; Casterton Village Hall; Crosby Ravensworth Village Hall; Dufton Village Hall; Gleaston Village Hall; Grasmere Village Hall; Helsington & Brigsteer Village Hall; Ireleth Temperance Hall; Kentmere Village Institute; Lazonby Village Hall; Levens Village Hall; Melmerby Village Hall; Murton Village Institute; Orton Market Hall; Rampside Village Hall; Skirwith Village Hall; Soulby Village Hall; The Club, Kirkby Stephen; The Community Hall, Grizebeck.

COUNTY DURHAM:

Barningham Village Hall; Boldron Village Hall; Bowes & Gilmonby Parish Hall; Burnhope Community Centre; Cotherstone Village Hall; Coundon & Leeholme Community Centre; Edmundbyers Village Hall; Frosterley Village Hall; Hamsterley Village Hall; Mickleton Village Hall; Scarth Memorial Hall, Staindrop; St Thomas Church Hall, Stanhope; UTASS, Middleton in Teesdale; Woodland Village Hall.

NORTHUMBERLAND:

Allendale Village Hall; Amble Parish Hall; Bardon Mill & Henshaw Village Hall; Berwick Library; Blanchland Abbey; Felton Village Hall; Great Whittington Village Hall; Hepscott Parish Hall; Hexham Library; Howick Village Hall; Lesbury Village Hall; Middleton & Todridge Village Hall; Newbrough Town Hall; Newton & Bywell Village Hall; Shilbottle Community Hall; St Cuthberts Church, Norham; St Mary's Village Hall; The Cheviot Centre, Wooler; The Hearth Arts Centre, Horsley; Wark Town Hall & Mechanics Institute; Whittingham Memorial Institute; Wingates Village Institute.

LIST OF ARTISTS

PERFORMANCE ARTISTS

Allison Lupton, Shane Cooke, Kyle
 Waymouth
 Badapple Theatre Company
 Black Liver
 CaroleW Productions
 Christine Tassan et les Imposteures
 Clare Sands
 Darryl J Carrington
 Elysium Theatre Company
 Emmerson & Ward
 Fifi La Mer
 Get Lost and Found
 George Egg
 Indigo Moon Theatre
 James Rowland
 Jam Jar Theatre
 Just Some Theatre
 Katie Doherty & The Navigators
 Kenneth Wilson
 Lara Deutsch & Adam Cicchillitti
 Lovely Assistant
 Lyon and Bird
 Maddie Morris
 Mindfell
 Moscow Drug Club
 Noble Jacks
 Patrick Monahan
 PSYCHEdelight Theatre Company of
 Sanctuary
 Rosemary Lee
 Rube & Rake
 Rum Ragged
 Storm in the North
 The Bookshop Band
 The Great Baldini
 Whattalife Productions - Lucy Stevens
 While & Matthews

VISUAL ARTISTS

Adeline and Twine
 Crafts for Wellbeing
 Jessica Kinnersley Textiles
 Julie Evans Printmaker
 Steve Pardue Art
 Teesdale Felt

PARTICIPATE ARTISTS

Gav Cross
 Indigo Moon Theatre
 Jam Jar Theatre
 Kate Gregson
 Kate Halsall
 Georgia Hill
 Aileen Kelly
 Virpi Kettu
 Let's Circus
 Life & Limb
 Rowan McCabe
 Meta 4 Dance
 Maddie Morris
 Moving Parts Arts
 Supriya Nagarajan
 Kema Sikazwe
 Robin Webb

LIST OF EVENTS

SPRING 2024

IdLib
 Gertrude Lawrence A Lovely Way To
 Spend An Evening
 Katie Doherty & The Navigators
 Creative Highlights: Metal Embossed
 Coasters
 Limelight
 Creative Highlights: Floral Lino Printing
 with Chine Colle
 Patrick Monahan: Exclusively
 The Regalettes
 Clare Sands
 While & Matthews
 Out of the Box
 Creative Highlights: Landscapes in
 Watercolour and Stitch
 Frognal & Fox: A Life in Song
 Noble Jacks (duo)
 Rum Ragged

AUTUMN 2024

Creative Highlights: Needle Felted
 Herdwick Sheep
 Highway Cello
 Creative Highlights: Metal Embossed
 Christmas Ornament
 James Rowland Dies at the End of the
 Show
 Wanderlust
 Creative Highlights: Wet Felted
 Landscapes
 Creative Highlights: Christmas Card Lino
 Printing with Chine Colle
 Love It If We Beat Them
 George Egg: Set Menu
 Lyon & Bird
 Moving Worlds
 Moscow Drug Club
 Allison Lupton, Shane Cook and Kyle
 Waymouth
 The Bookshop Band

AUTUMN 2024 (cont.)

Devilled Eggs
 Christine Tassan: On The Road
 The Plot Thickens
 Magic Cabaret
 Maddie Morris
 Mohand & Peter
 Creative Highlights: Christmas Card
 Lino Printing with Chine Colle
 Penguins
 Polaris The Polar Bear

SPRING 2025

Rube & Rake
 Seedheart
 Lovely Assistant
 Creative Highlights: Needle Felted
 Easter Eggs
 Creative Highlights: Illuminated Felt
 Bowl
 Fifi La Mer: Let us take you to Paris
 Creative Highlights: A Shortcut to
 Nature Journalling
 Creative Highlights: Carve, Paint & Print
 - Provincetown White Line
 The Moth
 Creative Highlights: Macrame Plant
 Hanger
 Roald Dahl and the Imagination Seekers
 The Dreamtime Fellrunner

Highlights Productions
Financial Statements
For the Year Ending
31 March 2025

JANE ASCROFT ACCOUNTANCY LIMITED

Chartered accountants
Enterprise House
Harmire Enterprise Park
Barnard Castle
County Durham
DL12 8XT

Highlights Productions

Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 March 2025

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Highlights Productions

Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report)

Year Ended 31 March 2025

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purposes of company law, present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Objectives and Activities

Objectives

The object of the charity is to advance the education of the public in the practice and appreciation of the arts, especially in the counties of Durham, Northumberland and Cumbria, through the provision of a rural arts service. The company aims to meet its objectives by presenting and promoting a programme of drama, dance, literature, music, storytelling and visual arts. It achieves these aims through:- - continuing support of volunteer promoters to enable them to provide a professional service in providing a programme of high quality events in their venues; - continuing choice of a wide range of performances to the highest quality - securing the necessary funds to put these objectives in place and ensure the sustainability of the programme.

Review of the Development, Activities and Achievements of the Charity

The financial year of 2024/2025 has been the second year of a 3-year National Portfolio agreement with the Arts Council of England (ACE). In December 2024, we submitted an application to extend this funding to April 2027. The NPO agreement is awarded to Highlights (H) and Arts Out West (AOW) consortium, with H as the lead partner.

Local authority funding from Westmorland & Furness Council (previously Cumbria & South Lakeland) and Northumberland County Council remained at a standstill amount. Unfortunately, for the first time in many years, we received no funding from County Durham Council.

There have been two major staffing changes during the year, with the Creative Engagement Officer leaving in August and the General Manager retiring in December. We thanked them for the work they'd done for Highlights over the years. In September we welcomed a Community Programmer to the team in a new role for the organisation and in January we welcomed a new General Manager.

Highlights continues to work in partnership with over 65 village halls, community centres, libraries and schools across Cumbria, County Durham and Northumberland. Seasons continue to run as normal, with two per year in Spring and Autumn, and venues hosting performances and/or arts and crafts workshops.

The Highlights Participate programme has worked in primary and secondary schools across Cumbria, County Durham and Northumberland, delivering workshops from regional and national artists.

In March we launched a week-long fundraising campaign via The Big Give Arts for Impact to support the provision of free creative workshops in secondary schools across the three counties, inspiring the next generation of audiences, promoters, artists and arts administrators.

Highlights Productions

Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)*

Year Ended 31 March 2025

Achievements

- We successfully programmed 145 performances during 2024 - 2025 plus 4 performances for Northumberland libraries.
- We programmed a range of Creative Highlights workshops, working with regional artists across both seasons. 39 workshops were delivered.
- We continued to build our Participate programme, delivering workshops to primary and secondary schools and community groups.
- Highlights continued to work as a lead partner in the Rural Touring Dance Initiative (RTDI). We work alongside The Place, National Rural Touring Forum, Take Art and Sonia Sabri Company to deliver this national programme, funded by Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Arts Council England.
- As part of the RTDI programme we hosted a residency for Pagrav Dance and Britten Sinfonia at The Maltings Berwick, which included a workshop with Memory Laner's Music Group, a group for people with dementia and their carers, and a sharing for members of the public and invited guests.
- Our Big Give Arts for Impact campaign raised over £4,000 to support work in secondary schools across the three counties.
- Highlights continue our artist development work alongside regional partners such as Northern Consortium of rural touring schemes, North East Exchange and Venues North as well as international partners Contact East Canada, Music PEI (Prince Edward Island) and Canadian Folk Music Awards.
- Highlights continued its work with Investors in the Environment (IIE), an environmental management system, the aim being to reduce our carbon footprint. As part of this project members of staff and trustees started volunteering at Eden River's Trust tree nursery in Penrith.

Financial Review

Finances

The organisation made an overall deficit of £35,478 (2024 - £4,255). This was made up of a deficit of £28,237 on unrestricted funds and a deficit of £7,241 on restricted funds. When the overall deficit is added to the funds brought forward of £191,238 it gives closing funds of £155,760 of which £15,439 are for restricted funds. This leaves general reserves of £140,321 as at 31 March 2025. Of that, £2,778 relates to fixed assets and £20,000 has been earmarked for a number of projects and so unrestricted free reserves at the end of the year were £117,543.

Reserves Policy

It is the policy of the charity to maintain unrestricted funds, which are the free reserves of the charity, at a level which provides sufficient funds to cover management, administration and support costs for six months. At the 31 March 2025 unrestricted reserves were above this minimum level.

Highlights Productions

Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)*

Year Ended 31 March 2025

Investment Policy

The Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Charity permit wide powers of investment. The Trustees should invest the money of the charity not immediately required for its purposes, in or upon such investments, securities or properties as may be thought fit.

Risk Assessment

The Trustees regularly review the risks to which the charity is exposed and consider the implication of those risks. The Trustees consider that the current volatile economic climate and its effects on possible audience numbers, together with the government financial reviews meaning local authority funding is less secure, as the most significant risks to the organisation. They are keeping these risks under continuous review.

Financial Plans for Future Periods

With approved funding from the Arts Council in place until March 2026, and an expectation that this may well be extended for a further year or possibly two, the grant income will not increase significantly to reflect the increased costs of overheads and programming. The Charity are going through a process of consolidation and in-depth data analysis of its activities. This analysis will assist with forming the basis for strategic development of the programming of events and projects to ensure the financial security of Highlights.

Highlights has consistently over-delivered on its key performance indicators from grant funders, and whilst continuing to support our volunteer promoters, we need to consolidate our activities to ensure the KPI's are delivered at a rate which matches our grant funding whilst still meeting our organisations aims and objectives of providing a professional, high quality and varied menu of events across the north of England.

Plans for Future Periods

- Consolidate our use of Eventotron, online event management system, to streamline our working processes.
- Develop and launch a new website, fully integrated with Eventotron and its booking system, bringing online sales in-house.
- Continued development of a funding strategy to secure the future of Highlights.
- Work on silver accreditation from Investors in the Environment (IIE), an environmental management system.
- As part of our work with the Rural Touring Dance Initiative, host a residency for Ceyda Tanc Dance.
- Continue to develop an induction and training programme for new volunteer promoters and venues.
- Work with other northern schemes to drive forward our development of rural and community touring in the north of England, in line with the action plan developed during 2024-2025.

Highlights Productions

Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)*

Year Ended 31 March 2025

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

Highlights Productions is a company limited by guarantee and registered charity. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association, which established the objects and powers of the charitable company, and is governed under its Articles of Association.

Management Structure

Highlights Productions is governed by a Board of Trustees who are both Trustees under charity legislation and Directors under company legislation. At each Annual General Meeting (AGM) one third of the Trustees must retire from office and may be re-elected at that same meeting. The members to retire shall be those longest in office since their last election. Between AGM's the Trustees may co-opt persons onto the Board to fill any vacancies. All co-opted members must stand down at the AGM following their co-option and are similarly eligible for re-election. All new trustees are subject to an open and robust selection process and undergo an induction process once co-opted/elected.

Day to day management of the company is delegated to the Director (Chief Executive Officer), line-managing staff, and developing strategies and policies in consultation with, and subject to the approval of, the Board.

Governance

The Board of Trustees continued to meet regularly, with 50% of meetings in person and 50% online.

The Board started the year with seven members and ended with the same members with no resignations or new members. Cinzia Hardy remains Chair and Mary Ingham remains Vice Chair.

During the year, the Board reviewed several policies in accordance with the policy schedule, and continued to review the organisation's risk register at each meeting.

The Finance Committee met four times, 25% of which were in person, and is made up of three trustees and the General Manager.

We continue to operate with three bank accounts, two for investment of reserves, and the main current account for daily working capital. Transfers were made between accounts as required to support the day-to-day management of finances, with board approval for each transfer.

During the year, a full skills audit indicated financial and HR management as well as an understanding the effects of social media on the organisation as areas which require development of understanding and target skills for future recruitment of new members.

Reference and Administrative Details

Registered charity name	Highlights Productions
Charity registration number	1100920
Company registration number	4646007
Principal office and registered office	Market Cross Cabin New Road Brough Kirkby Stephen Cumbria CA17 4AS

Highlights Productions

Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)*

Year Ended 31 March 2025

The Trustees

Ms C Hardy
Ms M Ingham
Ms E Lugg
Ms J A Campbell
Mr R Burns (Resigned 31 May 2024)
Mr I F Gledhill
Dr A C Jones
Ms S A Seed

Company Secretary

Ms K Lynch

Independent Examiner

Jane Ascroft FCA MA (Cantab)
Enterprise House
Harmire Enterprise Park
Barnard Castle
County Durham
DL12 8XT

Small Company Provisions

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies exemption.

The trustees' annual report was approved on and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:

Ms K Lynch
Charity Secretary

Highlights Productions

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Highlights Productions

Year Ended 31 March 2025

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Highlights Productions ('the charity') for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Responsibilities and Basis of Report

As the trustees of the company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements 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 the 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 charity'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 the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), 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 the charity as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements 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 financial statements 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.

Jane Ascroft FCA MA (Cantab)
Independent Examiner

Enterprise House
Harmire Enterprise Park
Barnard Castle
County Durham
DL12 8XT

Highlights Productions

Statement of Financial Activities (including income and expenditure account)

Year Ended 31 March 2025

			2025		2024
	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £	Total funds £
Income and endowments					
Donations and legacies	5	156,009	110,530	266,539	305,262
Charitable activities	6	76,322	–	76,322	67,972
Investment income	7	4,257	–	4,257	4,644
Total income		<u>236,588</u>	<u>110,530</u>	<u>347,118</u>	<u>377,878</u>
Expenditure					
Expenditure on charitable activities	8,9	264,825	117,771	382,596	382,133
Total expenditure		<u>264,825</u>	<u>117,771</u>	<u>382,596</u>	<u>382,133</u>
Net expenditure and net movement in funds		<u>(28,237)</u>	<u>(7,241)</u>	<u>(35,478)</u>	<u>(4,255)</u>
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		168,558	22,680	191,238	195,493
Total funds carried forward		<u>140,321</u>	<u>15,439</u>	<u>155,760</u>	<u>191,238</u>

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

The notes on pages 9 to 19 form part of these financial statements.

Highlights Productions

Statement of Financial Position

31 March 2025

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
Fixed Assets			
Tangible fixed assets	15	2,778	3,541
Current Assets			
Debtors	16	8,121	34,266
Cash at bank and in hand		163,581	158,664
		171,702	192,930
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	17	18,720	5,233
Net Current Assets		152,982	187,697
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities		155,760	191,238
Net Assets		155,760	191,238
Funds of the Charity			
Restricted funds		15,439	22,680
Unrestricted funds		140,321	168,558
Total charity funds	19	155,760	191,238

For the 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 company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476;
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

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

These financial statements were approved by the board of trustees and authorised for issue on, and are signed on behalf of the board by:

Ms C Hardy
Trustee

The notes on pages 9 to 19 form part of these financial statements.

Highlights Productions

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 March 2025

1. General Information

The charity is a public benefit entity and a private company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales and a registered charity in England and Wales. The address of the registered office is Market Cross Cabin, New Road, Brough, Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria, CA17 4AS.

2. Statement of Compliance

These financial statements have been prepared in compliance with FRS 102, 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland', the 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) (Charities SORP (FRS 102)) and the Companies Act 2006.

3. Accounting Policies

Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost basis, as modified by the revaluation of certain financial assets and liabilities and investment properties measured at fair value through income or expenditure.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the entity.

Going Concern

There are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue.

Judgements and Key Sources of Estimation Uncertainty

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported. These estimates and judgements are continually reviewed and are based on experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. The trustees consider that there are no significant estimates or judgements affecting these financial statements.

Fund Accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees to further any of the charity's purposes.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular future project or commitment.

Restricted funds are subjected to restrictions on their expenditure declared by the donor or through the terms of an appeal, and fall into one of two sub-classes: restricted income funds or endowment funds.

Highlights Productions

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year Ended 31 March 2025

3. Accounting Policies *(continued)*

Income

All income is included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income, any performance related conditions attached have been met or are fully within the control of the charity, the income is considered probable and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

Donations and legacy income is received by way of donations, legacies, grants and gifts and is included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable. Where legacies have been notified to the charity but the criteria for income recognition have not been met, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset and disclosed if material. Grants, where entitlement is not conditional on the delivery of a specific performance by the charity, are recognised when the charity becomes unconditionally entitled to the grant.

Donated services and facilities are included at the value to the charity, being the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market.

Investment income is included when receivable.

Income from charitable trading activity is accounted for when earned.

Income from grants, where related to performance and specific deliverables, are accounted for as the charity earns the right to consideration by its performance.

Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT which cannot be fully recovered, and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates:

Costs of raising funds comprise the costs associated with attracting donations, grants and legacies and the costs of trading for fundraising purposes.

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.

Other expenditure includes all expenditure that is neither related to raising funds for the charity nor part of its expenditure on charitable activities.

All costs are allocated between the expenditure categories of the SOFA on a basis designed to reflect the use of the resource. Costs relating to a particular activity are allocated directly, others are apportioned on an appropriate basis, as set out in the notes to the accounts.

Tangible Assets

Tangible assets are initially recorded at cost, and subsequently stated at cost less any accumulated depreciation and impairment losses. Any tangible assets carried at revalued amounts are recorded at the fair value at the date of revaluation less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

Highlights Productions

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year Ended 31 March 2025

3. Accounting Policies *(continued)*

Tangible Assets *(continued)*

An increase in the carrying amount of an asset as a result of a revaluation, is recognised in other recognised gains and losses, unless it reverses a charge for impairment that has previously been recognised as expenditure within the statement of financial activities. A decrease in the carrying amount of an asset as a result of revaluation, is recognised in other recognised gains and losses, except to which it offsets any previous revaluation gain, in which case the loss is shown within other recognised gains and losses on the statement of financial activities.

Depreciation

Depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost or valuation of an asset, less its residual value, over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:

Fixtures and fittings	- 25% reducing balance
Equipment	- Over 3 years reducing balance

Impairment of Fixed Assets

A review for indicators of impairment is carried out at each reporting date, with the recoverable amount being estimated where such indicators exist. Where the carrying value exceeds the recoverable amount, the asset is impaired accordingly. Prior impairments are also reviewed for possible reversal at each reporting date.

For the purposes of impairment testing, when it is not possible to estimate the recoverable amount of an individual asset, an estimate is made of the recoverable amount of the cash-generating unit to which the asset belongs. The cash-generating unit is the smallest identifiable group of assets that includes the asset and generates cash inflows that largely independent of the cash inflows from other assets or groups of assets.

For impairment testing of goodwill, the goodwill acquired in a business combination is, from the acquisition date, allocated to each of the cash-generating units that are expected to benefit from the synergies of the combination, irrespective of whether other assets or liabilities of the charity are assigned to those units.

Financial Instruments

The charity only has financial assets and liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

Defined Contribution Plans

Contributions to defined contribution plans are recognised as an expense in the period in which the related service is provided. Prepaid contributions are recognised as an asset to the extent that the prepayment will lead to a reduction in future payments or a cash refund.

When contributions are not expected to be settled wholly within 12 months of the end of the reporting date in which the employees render the related service, the liability is measured on a discounted present value basis. The unwinding of the discount is recognised as an expense in the period in which it arises.

Highlights Productions

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year Ended 31 March 2025

Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

Accrued income and tax recoverable is included at the best estimate of the amounts receivable at the balance sheet date.

Cash at Bank and in Hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

Creditors

Creditors are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Taxation

The company 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 company 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.

4. Limited by Guarantee

The liability of the members is limited. Every member of the charity undertakes to contribute to the assets of the charity in the event of the organisation being wound up while he or she is a member, or within one year after he or she ceases to be a member, for payment of the debts and liabilities of the charity contracted before he or she ceases to be a member, and of the costs, charges and expenses of winding up, and for the adjustment of the rights of the contributors among themselves, such amount as may be required, but not exceeding £1.

Highlights Productions

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year Ended 31 March 2025

5. Donations and Legacies

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £
Donations			
Donations	983	—	983
Promoters' membership fees	3,325	—	3,325
Reimbursed expenses	800	—	800
Grants			
ACE NPO Funds	120,694	12,000	132,694
ACE NPO Funds (AOW)	—	43,040	43,040
Bishop Auckland Town Hall	—	1,500	1,500
Live Borders	—	1,650	1,650
Cheshire West & Chester Council	—	1,300	1,300
Kirkgate Arts	—	4,000	4,000
Northumberland CC	8,748	—	8,748
Rural Arts	—	4,275	4,275
Westmorland & Furness Council	14,500	600	15,100
Spot On	—	1,350	1,350
Cumbria Community Foundation	—	1,000	1,000
CRTA	—	1,600	1,600
The Place	6,000	38,215	44,215
Other grants	959	—	959
	<u>156,009</u>	<u>110,530</u>	<u>266,539</u>

Highlights Productions

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year Ended 31 March 2025

5. Donations and Legacies (continued)

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Donations			
Donations	707	–	707
Gift aid	65	–	65
Promoters' membership fees	3,440	–	3,440
Reimbursed expenses	1,519	11,289	12,808
Grants			
ACE NPO Funds	120,694	12,000	132,694
ACE NPO Funds (AOW)	–	43,040	43,040
ACE HANDS	–	4,937	4,937
Durham County Council	9,374	–	9,374
Northumberland CC	8,748	–	8,748
Community Foundation Tyne & Wear	–	3,080	3,080
Westmorland & Furness Council	14,500	600	15,100
The Place	6,000	41,476	47,476
Culture Recovery Fund	22,500	–	22,500
Other grants	1,293	–	1,293
	<u>188,840</u>	<u>116,422</u>	<u>305,262</u>

6. Charitable Activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £
Workshop income	6,177	–	6,177
Ticket sales	70,145	–	70,145
	<u>76,322</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>76,322</u>
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Workshop income	6,450	–	6,450
Ticket sales	59,230	2,292	61,522
	<u>65,680</u>	<u>2,292</u>	<u>67,972</u>

7. Investment Income

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Bank interest receivable	<u>4,257</u>	<u>4,257</u>	<u>4,644</u>	<u>4,644</u>

Highlights Productions

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year Ended 31 March 2025

8. Expenditure on Charitable Activities by Fund Type

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £
Performance costs	117,770	54,442	172,212
Staff costs	121,674	15,999	137,673
Administration	8,438	106	8,544
Marketing and advertising	6,736	38	6,774
Grants payable	–	43,640	43,640
Premises costs	6,854	–	6,854
Depreciation	927	–	927
Legal and professional fees	2,426	3,546	5,972
	<u>264,825</u>	<u>117,771</u>	<u>382,596</u>
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Performance costs	97,025	54,460	151,485
Staff costs	121,377	16,700	138,077
Administration	6,704	2,658	9,362
Marketing and advertising	12,062	7,173	19,235
Grants payable	–	52,000	52,000
Premises costs	6,424	–	6,424
Depreciation	1,176	–	1,176
Legal and professional fees	2,344	2,030	4,374
	<u>247,112</u>	<u>135,021</u>	<u>382,133</u>

9. Expenditure on Charitable Activities by Activity Type

	Activities undertaken directly £	Grant funding of activities £	Total funds 2025 £	Total fund 2024 £
Performance costs	172,212	–	172,212	151,485
Staff costs	137,673	–	137,673	138,077
Administration	8,544	–	8,544	9,362
Marketing and advertising	6,774	–	6,774	19,235
Grants payable	–	43,640	43,640	52,000
Premises costs	6,854	–	6,854	6,424
Depreciation	927	–	927	1,176
Legal and professional fees	5,972	–	5,972	4,374
	<u>338,956</u>	<u>43,640</u>	<u>382,596</u>	<u>382,133</u>

Highlights Productions

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year Ended 31 March 2025

10. Analysis of Grants

	2025 £	2024 £
Grants to Institutions		
Arts Out West	43,040	43,040
Heron Theatre	600	600
HANDS Legacy Bursaries	—	8,360
	<u>43,640</u>	<u>52,000</u>
Total grants	<u>43,640</u>	<u>52,000</u>

11. Net Expenditure

Net expenditure is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2025 £	2024 £
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	<u>927</u>	<u>1,176</u>

12. Independent Examination Fees

	2025 £	2024 £
Fees payable to the independent examiner for: Independent examination of the financial statements	<u>960</u>	<u>990</u>

13. Staff Costs

The total staff costs and employee benefits for the reporting period are analysed as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Wages and salaries	122,750	121,039
Social security costs	4,513	4,172
Employer contributions to pension plans	4,910	3,631
	<u>132,173</u>	<u>128,842</u>

The average head count of employees during the year was 6 (2024: 6). The average number of full-time equivalent employees during the year is analysed as follows:

	2025 No.	2024 No.
Direct staff	4	4
Admin and office staff	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>

No employee received employee benefits of more than £60,000 during the year (2024: Nil).

Highlights Productions

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year Ended 31 March 2025

13. Staff Costs (continued)

Key Management Personnel

Key management personnel include all persons that have authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the charity. The total compensation paid to key management personnel for services provided to the charity was £48,221 (2024:£45,465).

14. Trustee Remuneration and Expenses

No remuneration directly or indirectly out of the funds of the charity was paid or payable for the year to any trustee or to any person or persons known to be connected with any of them.

Four trustees were reimbursed a total of £215 for travel expenses in the year (2024 - One trustee reimbursed a total of £129).

15. Tangible Fixed Assets

	Fixtures and fittings £	Equipment £	Total £
Cost			
At 1 April 2024	9,288	20,766	30,054
Additions	–	164	164
At 31 March 2025	<u>9,288</u>	<u>20,930</u>	<u>30,218</u>
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2024	9,102	17,411	26,513
Charge for the year	47	880	927
At 31 March 2025	<u>9,149</u>	<u>18,291</u>	<u>27,440</u>
Carrying amount			
At 31 March 2025	<u>139</u>	<u>2,639</u>	<u>2,778</u>
At 31 March 2024	<u>186</u>	<u>3,355</u>	<u>3,541</u>

16. Debtors

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade debtors	8,121	28,793
Other debtors	–	5,473
	<u>8,121</u>	<u>34,266</u>

17. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade creditors	14,818	218
Accruals and deferred income	900	2,114
Social security and other taxes	2,183	2,182
Pension creditor	819	719
	<u>18,720</u>	<u>5,233</u>

Highlights Productions

Notes to the Financial Statements *(continued)*

Year Ended 31 March 2025

18. Pensions and Other Post Retirement Benefits

Defined contribution plans

The amount recognised in income or expenditure as an expense in relation to defined contribution plans was £4,910 (2024: £3,631).

19. Analysis of Charitable Funds

Unrestricted funds

	At 1 April 2024	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	At 31 March 2025
	£	£	£	£	£
General reserves	111,147	236,588	(262,528)	32,336	117,543
Fixed asset reserves	3,541	–	(927)	164	2,778
Potential office move	162	–	(162)	–	–
IT development	1,000	–	(1,000)	–	–
Creative Eng - Secondary school	208	–	(208)	–	–
Commissioning pot	20,000	–	–	–	20,000
Staffing budget	10,000	–	–	(10,000)	–
Culture Recovery Fund	22,500	–	–	(22,500)	–
	<u>168,558</u>	<u>236,588</u>	<u>(264,825)</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>140,321</u>

	At 1 April 2023	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	At 31 March 2024
	£	£	£	£	£
General reserves	107,039	236,664	(241,806)	9,250	111,147
Fixed asset reserves	4,717	–	(1,176)	–	3,541
CRM	3,000	–	–	(3,000)	–
Fundraising support	1,400	–	–	(1,400)	–
Potential office move	2,000	–	(1,838)	–	162
IT development	1,000	–	–	–	1,000
Creative Eng - Secondary school	2,500	–	(2,292)	–	208
Commissioning pot	20,000	–	–	–	20,000
Staffing budget	10,000	–	–	–	10,000
Culture Recovery Fund	–	22,500	–	–	22,500
	<u>151,656</u>	<u>259,164</u>	<u>(247,112)</u>	<u>4,850</u>	<u>168,558</u>

Highlights Productions

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year Ended 31 March 2025

19. Analysis of Charitable Funds (continued)

Restricted funds

	At 1 April 2024	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	At 31 March 2025
	£	£	£	£	£
HANDS	1,848	–	–	–	1,848
Arts Out West	–	43,640	(43,640)	–	–
Participate	8,451	13,000	(13,931)	–	7,520
RTDI	12,381	53,890	(60,200)	–	6,071
	<u>22,680</u>	<u>110,530</u>	<u>(117,771)</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>15,439</u>

	At 1 April 2023	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	At 31 March 2024
	£	£	£	£	£
HANDS	25,263	4,937	(26,982)	(1,370)	1,848
Arts Out West	–	43,640	(43,640)	–	–
Participate	12,810	17,372	(18,251)	(3,480)	8,451
RTDI	5,764	52,765	(46,148)	–	12,381
	<u>43,837</u>	<u>118,714</u>	<u>(135,021)</u>	<u>(4,850)</u>	<u>22,680</u>

20. Analysis of Net Assets Between Funds

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2025
	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	2,778	–	2,778
Current assets	156,263	15,439	171,702
Creditors less than 1 year	(18,720)	–	(18,720)
Net assets	<u>140,321</u>	<u>15,439</u>	<u>155,760</u>

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2024
	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	3,541	–	3,541
Current assets	170,250	22,680	192,930
Creditors less than 1 year	(5,233)	–	(5,233)
Net assets	<u>168,558</u>	<u>22,680</u>	<u>191,238</u>

Highlights Productions

Management Information

Year Ended 31 March 2025

The Following Pages Do Not Form Part of the Financial Statements.

Highlights Productions

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities

Year Ended 31 March 2025

	2025 £	2024 £
Income and endowments		
Donations and legacies		
Donations	983	707
Gift aid	–	65
Promoters' membership fees	3,325	3,440
Reimbursed expenses	800	12,808
ACE NPO Funds	132,694	132,694
ACE NPO Funds (AOW)	43,040	43,040
ACE HANDS	–	4,937
Bishop Auckland Town Hall	1,500	–
Live Borders	1,650	–
Cheshire West & Chester Council	1,300	–
Durham County Council	–	9,374
Kirkgate Arts	4,000	–
Northumberland CC	8,748	8,748
Community Foundation Tyne & Wear	–	3,080
Rural Arts	4,275	–
Westmorland & Furness Council	15,100	15,100
Spot On	1,350	–
Cumbria Community Foundation	1,000	–
CRTA	1,600	–
The Place	44,215	47,476
Culture Recovery Fund	–	22,500
Other grants	959	1,293
	<u>266,539</u>	<u>305,262</u>
Charitable activities		
Workshop income	6,177	6,450
Ticket sales	70,145	61,522
	<u>76,322</u>	<u>67,972</u>
Investment income		
Bank interest receivable	4,257	4,644
	<u>4,257</u>	<u>4,644</u>
Total income	<u>347,118</u>	<u>377,878</u>

Highlights Productions

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities *(continued)*

Year Ended 31 March 2025

	2025 £	2024 £
Expenditure		
Performance costs		
Accommodation	100	1,043
Artists' fees	156,720	129,530
Workshop artist fees	5,580	13,218
Promoter training	62	667
Craft artist fees	9,750	7,027
	<u>172,212</u>	<u>151,485</u>
Staff costs		
Wages	122,750	121,039
Employer's NIC	4,513	4,172
Pension costs	4,910	3,631
Freelance work	—	2,750
Travel	5,278	4,756
Staff training and other staff costs	222	1,729
	<u>137,673</u>	<u>138,077</u>
Administration		
Printing and stationery	198	188
Refreshments	561	937
Postage	90	49
Telephone	1,291	1,085
Computer & website expenses	2,578	2,425
Photocopying	589	607
Subscriptions	2,223	764
Administration	—	1,647
Research costs	666	323
Office equipment	164	1,107
Bank charges and interest	184	250
Bad debts	—	(20)
	<u>8,544</u>	<u>9,362</u>

Highlights Productions

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities *(continued)*

Year Ended 31 March 2025

	2025 £	2024 £
Marketing and advertising		
Advertising and marketing	645	10,436
Brochures	2,910	4,082
Mailing list	529	2,655
Photographs	—	140
Posters	2,690	1,922
	<u>6,774</u>	<u>19,235</u>
Grants payable		
Arts Out West	43,040	43,040
Heron Theatre	600	600
HANDS Bursaries	—	8,360
	<u>43,640</u>	<u>52,000</u>
Premises costs		
Rent	4,200	3,000
Water rates	310	130
Light and heat	424	973
Repairs and renewals	—	602
Insurance	1,463	1,424
Laundry and cleaning	173	257
Room hire	198	38
Health & Safety	86	—
	<u>6,854</u>	<u>6,424</u>
Depreciation		
Deprecation	<u>927</u>	<u>1,176</u>
Legal and professional fees		
Accountancy fees	2,206	990
Organisational development	62	2,799
Other costs	158	585
RTDI grants returned	3,546	—
	<u>5,972</u>	<u>4,374</u>
Total expenditure	<u>382,596</u>	<u>382,133</u>
Net expenditure	<u>(35,478)</u>	<u>(4,255)</u>