GLADRAGS COMMUNITY COSTUME TRUST

England & Wales · Charity number 1122704

Details

Status	Registered
Legal form	Other
Registered	2008-02-08
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	Gladrags Unit 10 Westergate Business Centre Westergate Road Brighton BN2 4QN
Phone	01273 609184
Email	office@gladragscostumes.org.uk
Website	www.gladragscostumes.org.uk

Activities

Objects: 3.1) EDUCATING THE PUBLIC IN HISTORICAL AND WORLD DRESS BY PROVIDING LOW COST COSTUMES AND RELATED RESOURCES AS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL.3.2) TO ADVANCE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC BY PROVIDING VARIOUS COSTUMES AND RELATED RESOURCES AT LOW COST AS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL.

Activities: Provides affordable costume hire, educational resource boxes and practical assistance to: schools/ colleges, community/ youth groups, charities/ not for profit organisations, amateur/ fringe arts. Delivers a Community Outreach Programme of educational sewing-based workshops; interactive storytelling / reminiscence/ dressing-up activities. Promotes costume re-use, by re-styling or rehoming.

Classification

- **How:** Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** Education/training, Arts/culture/heritage/science
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities, People Of A Particular Ethnic Or Racial Origin, Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, Other Defined Groups, The General Public/mankind

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Geography

- **Area of benefit:** NOT DEFINED. IN PRACTICE, NATIONAL
- East Sussex
- Surrey
- West Sussex

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£85,036	£110,215	-	-
2024-03-31	£101,301	£104,818	-	-
2023-03-31	£90,566	£87,531	-	-
2022-03-31	£64,018	£75,061	-	-
2021-03-31	£94,801	£55,890	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
HEATHER MAE BUTLER	Chair	2018-01-30
John William Adams		2022-10-26
Kathryn Nicola Coleman		2024-11-04
Neil Border		2021-11-04

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GLADRAGS COMMUNITY COSTUME TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1122704

Accounts

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name	No (if any)
Gladrags Community Costume Trust	

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	01/04/2024	To	31/03/2025

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Designated funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Hire Fees	46,822	-	-	46,822	53,219
Membership	5,247	-	-	5,247	4,290
Grants		-	-	-	23,250
Donations	536	-	17,741	18,277	12,702
Gift Aid Claims	-	-	-	-	1,400
Employment Allowance	-	-	-	-	-
Event Fees	3,028	-	500	3,528	1,980
Sales	5,296	-	-	5,296	3,892
Other	5,866	-	-	5,866	568
Sub total *(Gross income for AR)*	66,795	-	18,241	85,036	101,302
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	66,795	-	18,241	85,036	101,302
A3 Payments					
Premises (rent,business rates)	-	5,960	-	5,960	4,903
Insurance	-	815	-	815	1,343
Office,Utilities & Maintenance	1,293	4,308	653	6,254	8,633
Equipment	135	712	-	847	1,351
Staff & Volunteers	35,289	730	3,116	39,136	36,767
Workshops	-	7	30	38	148
Sessional Fees	37,295	5,564	11,168	54,027	48,787
PR & Communications	-	293	-	293	-
Professional Fees	-	237	600	837	600
Stock & Stock Care	1,105		353	1,458	1,075
Sales & Fundraising	432		-	432	139
Misc	1	20	-	21	83
Training	-	99	-	99	989
Sub total	75,550	18,745	15,920	110,215	104,818
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	75,550	18,745	15,920	110,215	104,818
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 8,755	- 18,745	2,321	- 25,179	- 3,516
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	33,418	19,938	12,696	66,052	69,622
Cash funds this year end	24,663	1,193	15,018	40,874	66,106

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Designated funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank less amounts due	24,663	1,193	15,018
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	24,663	1,193	15,018
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities	Independent Examination	Unrestricted	600	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
		J. Adams	26/1/26

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From	Period start date			To	Period end date		
	Day	Month	Year		Day	Month	Year
	1st	April	2024		31st	March	2025

Section A Reference and administration details

Charity name	Gladrags Community Costume Trust
Other names charity is known by	Gladrags Community Costume Resource
Registered charity number (if any)	1122704
Charity's principal address	Unit 10, Westergate Business Centre
	Westergate Road
	Brighton
	Postcode BN2 4QN

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Heather Butler	Chair		Trustees
	John Adams	Treasurer		Trustees
3	Neil Border	Secretary		Trustees
4	Kathryn Coleman	Trustee	4.11.24 - 31.3.25	Trustees

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

Vania Mills

Section B Structure, governance and management

Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document (eg. trust deed, constitution)	Trust Deed
How the charity is constituted (eg. trust, association, company)	Charitable Trust
Trustee selection methods (eg. appointed by, elected by)	Appointed by Trustees

Section C Objectives and activities

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

Educating the public in historical and world dress by providing low-cost costumes and related resources as an educational tool.

To advance education of the public by providing various costumes and related resources at low cost as an educational tool.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)

OVERVIEW

Gladrags is a unique provider of costume resources and expertise which serve to further the activities of our beneficiary groups. Central to our ethos is a commitment to sustainability: since 1994, we have championed the reuse of costumes, building a collection of 10,000 items, 95% of which are donated stock that we repurpose and adapt to benefit the community time and time again.

We support and enhance the projects of our beneficiary groups by offering the following:

Affordable hire of pre-loved costumes and artefacts to organisations that would otherwise struggle to afford or have access to them. Our beneficiary groups include:

- **Education:** schools, colleges, further and higher education
- **Arts:** amateur and fringe theatre, film and arts; professional theatre, film, heritage and socially conscious arts organisations
- **Community and wellbeing:** libraries, day centres, community and youth groups, charities, and not-for-profits

Our principal resources are:

- **Historical, world dress, and show costumes and accessories** for children and adults, curated especially for educational activities, performances, wellbeing projects, and community arts
- **Resource boxes:** costumes and artefacts tailored to specific projects or themes, commonly supporting primary school topics and encouraging 'historical detective' work and role-play
- **Reminiscence boxes:** collections of authentic vintage clothing and everyday memorabilia selected to reflect particular eras or themes, commonly used to support reminiscence work, and heritage exhibitions and activities

Store visits that offer educational or wellbeing support through:

- Nurture visits for children, young people and adults who experience additional disadvantage, providing experiential access to culture and the arts via costume.

- Mentoring school pupils and university students engaged in drama or costume-based assignments and projects.

Costume-making resources:

- Sewing equipment and recycled fabrics to resource beneficiary groups', encouraging sustainable practice.
- Library collection referencing historical dress of ordinary people; world and cultural dress; affordable, alternative costume options.

Rehome-it! Scheme:

Surplus and donated costumes, props, and textiles are gifted back to the community, with priority given to schools, colleges, community arts groups, and low-income families. Completing the donation cycle, approximately 1.5 tonnes of items are received via Gladrags and over 2 tonnes rehomed annually, helping to reduce textile waste.

COMMUNITY

Through our Community Outreach Programme, we extend our reach to individuals and groups facing disadvantage and isolation. In response to the increasing cost-of-living crisis, we particularly focus on partnering with food security projects to deliver the following:

Creative dress-up activities designed to encourage a sense of play for children and families navigating life challenges. Costume inspires the creation of characters, scenarios and social interaction, helping children explore their hopes and dreams.

Reminiscence sessions with older adults who come together to be socially active and to combat isolation. Our sessions are dementia-friendly and enhance wellbeing with:

- Themed memory boxes that ignite the meaningful sharing of past experiences.
- Vintage and costume collections that encourage playful interaction and remind participants of the joy that dress-up can bring at any age.

VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteer team is essential to the smooth running of all our operations. Their dedication directly influences our capacity to serve more beneficiaries and fulfil our organisational mission.

We support a diverse community of around 70 volunteers annually, providing opportunities for people with a range of learning and support needs, and

tailoring roles to reflect individual interests and aspirations. We provide training opportunities and supported-work placements within the organisation that build, maintain and open pathways into the creative arts industry and wider employment opportunities.

Trustees have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)

SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental sustainability is at the heart of Gladrags' aims and objectives. The reuse of resources lies at the core of both our ethos and the services we provide, reflecting our commitment to embodying key organisational values. Our long-standing dedication to advocating for and be integral to a sustainable textile industry along with our early adoption of planet-friendly practices dates back to 1994. This longevity shapes our influence on organisations and individuals alike, while ensuring that our own carbon footprint remains minimal.

Our hire-not-buy approach promotes a consumer mindset of choosing high-quality, pre-loved garments over cheaply made, ethically questionable alternatives.

The 10,000 costumes we share with local communities are predominantly donated and recycled garments, a number of which we adapt to extend their life and versatility. We actively encourage beneficiary groups to donate their unused costumes back to Gladrags, enabling us to circulate these resources within our communities. Additionally, the free costume-making support and recycled materials we offer beneficiary groups further promotes sustainable costume practices among them.

Our Rehome-it! scheme embodies our commitment to reducing waste while providing vital support to the charities, schools, and community projects that benefit from it.

An ethos of wider participation and social inclusion underpins the delivery of and access to our services and our organisational purpose is sustained by this focus. Consequently, we are committed to reaching communities experiencing disadvantage and isolation, a goal we advance through our dedicated outreach projects.

We actively recruit, support, and develop volunteers with wide-ranging skills and learning needs and celebrate the inclusivity of our team as an organisational asset. The wellbeing of our volunteers and staff is central to Gladrags' sustainability, and the long-term commitment of many team members stands as a testament to this focus.

Section D Achievements and performance

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

PROVISION OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Gladrags reached 11,750 beneficiaries in 2024-25, an increase on 10,300 the previous year, by providing costumes and related resources to projects they participated in. Through our work, we contributed to the following key areas:

- **Education:** enhancing interactive learning by adding rich context to social history and world cultures; creating greater access to arts and culture within educational settings.
- **Sustainability:** championing a planet-friendly approach to costume, clothing and fashion; responsibly re-homing costumes and textiles within our local community, and resourcing climate-focussed initiatives.
- **Health and Wellbeing:** stimulating memory, imagination, creativity, and play through our outreach sessions; offering activities that promote positive mental health and wellbeing, while helping participants build self-confidence and develop awareness of their personal abilities.
- **Community cohesion:** bringing people together through live arts events and shared creative activities that encourage sociability and community connection.
- **Celebration:** infusing colour and magic into performance-based projects, theatre and film productions, as well as social and cultural events.

COSTUME PROVISION

Education

Our resource boxes enabled interactive, hands-on learning with artefacts and costume that, for example:

- Brought history to life for pupils studying topics such as Greek civilization at *Oak tree Primary* to the Islamic Empire at *Horn Park School*.
- Invited children to discover the experiences of WW2 evacuees at *Stanford Juniors* and *West Park Primary.*
- Enhanced educational experience with a kinesthetic approach, particularly suited to children and young people with special education needs such as a Viking's re-enactment at *Moulsecoomb Primary School*, and an exploration of Tudor and medieval life through the lens of clothing for a young person supported by *Sense Learning.*

Free World Book Day boxes remained a special focus, containing classic children's fairytale and literary character costumes to assist schools in providing outfits for children whose families face financial challenges in this global celebration.

Our mentoring of college and university students with costume or production responsibilities linked to their courses expanded during the year, including:

- Student group visits and styling sessions for film students at *Brighton Screen and Film School,* hair and make-up students at *Brighton Met college* and costume students at *Northbrook University* in Worthing.
- Hosting 1:1 themed sessions for young people from *Sense Learning*, exploring history, filmmaking, and scriptwriting to support interim education for children out of school or struggling to attend.
- Facilitating a workshop for *Northbrook College's* outreach Art & Design Club.

Youth Arts Access

Promoting and resourcing wider participation in community-led arts is at the centre of our subsidised costume hire ethos. Our proactive reach to youth-focussed groups this year has enabled us to support the creative vision of a broad range of organisations, including:

- Drama clubs such as *Kaleidoscope Theatre* in Lewes*, Wings Youth Theatre* in Hassocks*, Stagecoach clubs* in Hove, Haywards Heath, East Grinstead and Worthing which provide opportunities for young people to build friendships, develop social skills, and gain confidence, while also offering introductions to the arts industry.
- Organisations that co-create work with young people and offer free sessions to low-income families, including:
  - → Brighton's *Third Space Theatre,* where children and young people create theatre rooted in their own experience.

→ *A-listers Film club* in Lewes, a community cinema-based group supporting neurodivergent young adults to produce film trailers and amplify their voices on screen.

Projects rooted in wellbeing have also benefited from our support, such as:

- Wellbeing and recognition events for Brighton & Hove's *Children In Care Council.*
- A themed Christmas Dinner hosted by young teenagers at the *Crew Club* for local elders in Whitehawk.

Community and Wellbeing

The transformative power of costume plays a pivotal role in projects that use the arts to bring communities together. Highlights from 2024-25 include:

- Providing costumes for community casts in plays and pantomimes across Sussex, from *Copthorne Players*' *Jekyll and Hyde* and *Woodingdean Players*' *Jack and the Beanstalk* to *The Diggers* in Whitehawk, Brighton, produced by *The Crew Club* in partnership with *Victoria Melody* and *Brighton Festival*.
- Curating photobooth and dress-up experiences to complement community events such as *Sunday T-Dance*, a historical and cultural tea dance for the LGBTQ+ community, and *Carousel's Blue Camel Club*, an inclusive club night for learning-disabled young adults and their friends, which also provides a platform for learning-disabled performers.
- Supporting a wellbeing event for volunteers of *Brightstore*, a charity tackling food waste and food inequality through sustainable solutions.

Heritage

2024-25 was a notable year for Gladrags' support of heritage events, where our costume, memorabilia, and set-dressing resources brought history and culture vividly to life across Sussex. Highlights include:

- ***Lewes Council*'s Black History Month installation:** We provided costumes, memorabilia, and props to honour the story of the WW1 British West Indies Regiment stationed at Seaford.
- ***Charleston House's Queer Bloomsbury Festival*:** Our flamboyant mini wardrobe enriched an interactive life drawing workshop led by artist David Hoyle, encouraging artists to experiment with structural garment shapes.

- ***Friends of Victoria Hospital 60th Anniversary*:** We prepared a mannequin dressed as a 1910s nurse, replicating a historic photo to celebrate 60 years of the Friends of Victoria Hospital and highlight the hospital's rich community legacy since 1855.

- ***Brighton and Hove Albion*'s Great War acknowledgement:** Our vintage military uniforms enabled 18 junior club players to recreate a historic 1915 photo of a young football team, taken just before they left to serve in the war.

- ***Sussex Symphony Orchestra*'s Celebration of Verdi:** We provided authentic costume for an actor representing the composer, complementing a musical celebration of his life and most popular operatic, orchestral and choral works.

- ***Brighton Museum* Exhibitions:** We hosted free themed dress-up rooms and selfie booths for two major exhibitions:

  → *ABBA: One Week in Brighton*, celebrating ABBA's 1974 Eurovision victory.
  → *National Treasures: Rembrandt*, part of the nationwide 200th anniversary celebration of the National Gallery, London.

- ***Our Place, Brighton Festival:*** For the fourth consecutive year, Gladrags led artistic liaison and support for the artist-in-residence –this year, *Out of The Box Creative Arts*. As part of the local steering committee, we helped oversee free festival workshops and the final community event, enabling residents from Moulsecoomb and Bevendean - who often face barriers to arts access - to engage with culture and creativity.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

With 15 years of experience delivering outreach programmes, Gladrags continues to serve low-income communities with limited access to social and cultural activities. Our focus remains on East Brighton, reaching children, families, and older adults living in areas ranked among England's 20% most deprived by the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

In 2024, to mark our 30th anniversary, we expanded our family sessions, reinvigorated reminiscence activities and delivered over 30 free outreach activities overall, attended by 1,275 people. We brought themed dress-up corners to a variety of community events, including:

- **Youth-led festivals:** Cost-Of-Living Circus in Brighton and S'Kool Fest in Shoreham.
- **Diversity celebrations:** Hosted by Grassroots NGO Indian Futures and Brighton Met College (funded), recognising the contributions of students with English as a second language.
- **Events for under-5s:** Nursery Leaver's Celebration at Hollingdean Community Hub and Community Day at Moulsecoomb Family Hub.
-

- **Intergenerational Health and food poverty education:** *Very Local Food Fair* in Bevendean and a *Community Health Day* at *Robert Lodge* in Whitehawk.

Family sessions and food security partnerships

Our family sessions and food security partnerships enable us to bring the transformational power of dress-up play into the heart of communities facing hardship. These sessions:

- Encourage children to stretch their imaginations and actively engage in play.
- Provide a safe space for children to express themselves creatively and explore identity through costume.
- Offer families joyful respite and social connection amid challenging life circumstances.

In response to the escalating cost-of-living crisis, we deepened partnerships with local organisations, particularly community food initiatives, building on our shared vision to bring people together by combining nutritious food provision with creative, interactive activities. Our collaborative family sessions benefitted residents across Moulsecoomb and Bevendean through five events, in partnership with *CHOMP Moulsecoomb*, *Bevendean CHOMP*, and *St Andrew's Church*.

Addressing wellbeing and food provision together, these events offered families a 'day out' - a welcome break from daily pressures and an opportunity for joyful, sociable family fun.

Our dress-up activities became a regular feature at the following events throughout the year:

- Free holiday meal clubs run by *The Bevy Pub* in Bevendean and *Brighton CHOMP* in Whitehawk, Hangleton, and Central Brighton, supporting families receiving free school meals or on low incomes.
- Community cook-along sessions in Moulsecoomb with *Cooking Good* and *St George's Hall*.

Reaching older people

Following a brief pause, we relaunched our reminiscence programme, *Memories Matter*, addressing loneliness among older adults - a pressing issue highlighted by recent council data showing nearly 40% of people aged over 65 experience frequent loneliness.

To propel the programme forward, we engaged a freelance facilitator and ran:

- 4 taster sessions for 50+ social groups at *Robert Lodge* in Whitehawk and *St George's Hall* in Moulsecoomb. Using sensory artefacts, from clothing and

accessories to household items and music, these sessions encouraged participants to share stories and reconnect with their past.

- 10 free reminiscence sessions in total, including:
  - → Participation in the city's Ageing Well Festival with *Dress Through the Decades* events, where evocative fashion, vintage accessories and a DIY vinyl jukebox, sparked memories from the 1960s to 1980s - captured on polaroid in retro photobooth.
  - → Three winter festival reminiscence sessions during the Christmas season, a time when loneliness is often felt most keenly. Seasonal dress-up, music, and storytelling invited elders to rediscover cherished memories, connect with others, and share laughter and a song or two.

SCOPE OF BENEFICIARIES

Gladrags maintained our commitment to prioritising children and adults most in need by:

- Tailoring our resources to meet the specific needs of educational and community projects focused on addressing disadvantage.
- Maintaining our longstanding subsidy of costume provision for grassroots beneficiaries, with prices unchanged since 2010.
- Delivering our community outreach programme in partnership with food security organisations operating in the most disadvantaged areas of Brighton.

We also expanded our reach to new beneficiary groups through:

- Proactive engagement with local schools, community organisations, and the arts sector.
- Promoting our resource provision beyond Brighton through a consistent online and social media presence that celebrated our mission whilst equally giving a platform to our beneficiary groups.

New beneficiaries across the year included:

- *Greenway Academy* in Horsham and *Southover Primary School* in Lewes*,* who benefitted from resource boxes and costumes supporting Stunning Starts, an innovative approach by teachers to introduce new topics at the start of the school term.

- *Millais School* in Horsham and *Handcross Park School* who were able to authentically costume their productions of *Mathilda* and *Little Women* respectively.

- Amateur arts groups such as *Jewel Performing Arts (dance)*, *Rustington Players* (theatre) and A*shington Musical Theatre* who were able to supplement their own wardrobes affordably and avoid the need to hire full show sets unnecessarily.

- Emerging professional theatre companies who accessed high quality costumes at discounted rates, enabling professional-quality productions despite limited budgets. Notable companies included the critically acclaimed *Connor Baum Theatre Company* and *Club Silencio*, a queer, satirical immersive theatre group.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

Hire-Not-Buy Service

Over the year, we mitigated the environmental impact of one-time-use costumes by facilitating over 650 hires, significantly reducing the demand for new costume purchases. Our regular beneficiaries have learned to scale their projects sustainably by relying on Gladrags as a principal resource. New beneficiaries frequently access costumes for the first time thanks to the affordability of our service and strong alignment with educational curricula and production needs. A distinctive strength of Gladrags is our extensive collection of child and teen-sized costumes, thoughtfully curated to suit popular historical periods as well as large-scale musicals and theatre productions, ensuring relevance and accessibility for a wide range of creative projects.

Together with our beneficiaries we prevent textile waste, lower carbon emissions associated with manufacturing and shipping new garments, and champion a circular economy by extending the life of each costume through multiple use.

Brighton Textile Reuse Hub

The *Textile Reuse Hub (TRH)* is an 18-month-strong partnership between Gladrags, *Leftover Threads* (garment upcycling specialists), and *Smarter Uniforms* (collectors and redistributors of school uniforms). Pooling our resources, community networks, and expertise, we advanced shared objectives to promote and facilitate textile reuse by:

- Increasing the reuse and circulation of existing textiles locally through 12 joint events, rehoming costumes, textiles, school uniforms, and clothing for children aged 0-12.
- Addressing the rising cost of living through these events and by running simple clothing repair workshops and a World Book Day costume-making workshop.
- Raising awareness of the environmental impact of textile waste and the importance of sustainable practices by:
  - → Being one of the founding organisations of *Brighton and Hove City Council's Circular Textile Forum*.
  - → Participating in *Sustainable Fashion Week* and engaging sustainability organisations across our city to form a future Sustainability Network.
  - → Commissioning Brighton University research students to produce a report on charity shop surplus clothing and textile waste streams.

Rehome-it!:

From the TRH base Gladrags' grew the Rehome-it! Scheme, holding regular events to redistribute our surplus costumes and textiles for free within the Sussex community. Especially aimed at schools, colleges and grassroots community groups it prompts us to assess the relevance and usage of our existing costume collections, and to pass on items donated to Gladrags that are more suited to other projects.

The Rehome-it! Scheme acts as an important extension to our hire-not-buy service and aligns with local and UK-wide ambitions for a circular economy, all contributing to the *Brighton and Hove City Council*'s objective of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030.

We engaged with over 30 groups and more than 100 individuals across the year and saved 2.4 tonnes of items from textile waste or recycling, in the following ways:

6 Rehome-it! Open Days and ongoing store visits supporting organisations in the following ways:

- Supporting textile upcycling and repurposing projects in Brighton for *The Network of International Women*, *MET college* and *Blatchington Mill School.*
- Assisting student art and costume coursework at *Northbrook College*, *Brighton University*, and *Brighton Screen and Film School*.
- Building or extending community costume collections for local not-for-profits including *Voices* drama group, *Eastbourne Gilbert and Sullivan Society*, and *Southover Bonfire Society* in Lewes.
- Providing sensory costume collections for weekly sessions with learning-disabled performing arts groups at *St John's College*, *Outlook Foundation*, and the *Far Far Away Musical Group*.
- Supplying eclectic items for children's dressing up boxes to support *Moulsecoomb and Coombe Road Primary School*'s Opal schemes, boosting imaginative free play activities in breaktimes.

8 outreach give-away events, partnering with Smarter Uniforms and Leftover Threads. Collectively we gifted over 350 dressing-up costumes, school uniforms, and baby/children's clothes directly to low-income families via:

- Gladrags outreach activities in Moulsecoomb, Bevendean and Whitehawk
- Community events at family hubs in Whitehawk and Moulsecoomb

Rehome-it! Facebook group
The purpose of this group is to facilitate direct item exchanges among members, promote external bulk rehoming opportunities, and foster connections between groups to share ideas for reuse and repurposing.

Sustainability Placements:

Throughout the year, we supported 8 volunteers through textile sustainability placements, offering pathways to further education and employment for young people and those stepping back into the workplace. These placements provide volunteers with diverse learning needs the opportunity to develop practical skills and sustainability knowledge while supporting our costume provision and community outreach.

Key benefits for volunteers included:

- Acquiring practical skills such as customer service, repair and upcycling techniques, costume styling and garment repurposing - all framed within sustainability and industry contexts.
- Achieving learning objectives evidenced by certification relevant to the modern workplace, where sustainable practices are increasingly valued.
- Becoming confident ambassadors for reducing apparel waste through our hire-not-buy service and broader sector initiatives combating fast fashion.

Vintage Sales

Selling our vintage stock is a key means of repurposing garments and dress fabrics that are less relevant to the beneficiary groups accessing our costume store and Rehome-it! scheme. Through both online and in-person sales, we align with our circular fashion ethos by using the resale of clothing to fund our mission and serve communities across Sussex. This approach also promotes the purchase of second-hand clothing, positioning us as an active part of the solution to textile waste.

Growing public awareness of the environmental impact of fast fashion has enabled us to connect with new audiences eager to reduce their personal textile footprint and choose sustainable alternatives over buying new. That said, online sales remained modest leading us to pause this activity in September 2024. Additionally, the mini vintage outlets we had established were curtailed as several shops closed, impacted by the surge in resale platforms like Vinted and eBay.

To adapt, we expanded our pop-up sales, tailoring events to diverse audiences. Highlights included:

- Joint pop-up sale with the sustainable preloved clothing shop *Circles Store* in central Brighton.

- Participation for the second consecutive year in the *Sustainable Fashion Week* marketplace hosted by *Brighton Fashion Collective*.

At *Sustainable Fashion Week*, we showcased our full vintage apparel collection alongside a curated range of 'repair and refashion' pieces. This one-day event raised over £900 in revenue and provided a meaningful platform for Gladrags' Director to join a panel of leading local textile sustainability organisations. We also participated in the sustainable fashion show, presenting themed looks that celebrated the diversity and resilience of our vintage resources.

This engagement strengthened our connection with Brighton's circular fashion community and amplified our environmental mission, inspiring more people to embrace sustainable fashion choices.

VOLUNTEERS

Opportunities:

Over the course of the year, 75 volunteers contributed their time and skills to maintaining our resources, delivering activities, and serving our beneficiaries. We welcomed 37 new volunteers to the team, reflecting steady growth and increasing engagement.

We provided volunteer opportunities tailored to a wide range of learning, social, and career needs. This year, with a particular focus on increasing youth participation, 33 volunteers aged 25 and under joined our team through a variety of pathways:

- 3 supported workplace opportunities for young people with a learning disability
- 10 work experience placements for young people in school, home-educated or who were recent school leavers
- 2 university student module placements
- 2 internships for BA university students respectively studying Occupational Therapy and Fashion and Communication
- 16 further roles for school and university students

8 young people completed certificated textile sustainability placements, designed to equip them with practical skills and industry knowledge that support their progression into further education or employment within the growing sustainable fashion and textile sectors.

Volunteer Team Growth

This growth was supported by embedding a consistent, digitised recruitment and onboarding process, alongside strengthening links with local organisations that coordinate volunteer placements. Key partnerships included:

- Work Experience Coordinators at *Brighton MET College, Northbrook College, Crawley College*, and local sixth forms including *BHASVIC* and *Varndean* Secondary Schools.
- Volunteer Coordinators at five *Brighton & Hove City Council Family Hubs*.
- Course leaders on Fashion, Design, and Art programmes at *Brighton, Sussex,* and *Northbrook Universities.*

This expansion enabled us to:

- Develop a volunteer administration team, enhancing digitisation of hire processes and improving customer service efficiency.

- Introduce a buddy system, pairing experienced volunteers with newcomers. This peer support fostered positive volunteering relationships, offered rewarding leadership opportunities for buddies, and strengthened our ability to maintain a rolling team of around 35 volunteers supervised by just three part-time staff.

Progression:

For many, volunteering at Gladrags is a stepping-stone on personal and professional journeys, helping build portfolios and self-confidence. We maintained a strong commitment to supporting progression by tailoring roles and signposting volunteers to relevant opportunities, including wardrobe and styling work with local theatre companies and low-budget film projects.

Since working with us in 2024-25:

- 3 volunteers gained hands-on industry experience at Gladrags, preparing them for university courses in costume design and construction.

- 3 volunteers boosted their portfolios and costume styling skills, embarking on careers in fashion, costume design, and film costume departments.

- 2 recent graduates acquired invaluable customer service and administrative experience, gaining confidence to secure paid roles in office management and administration.

Engagement:

For others still their contribution to Gladrags is an integral part of their life, and by March 2025, 5 volunteers in our team had been with us for over 15 years,

3 for more than 10 years and another 7 for over 5 years. This depth of experience strengthens our team and creates a welcoming, stable environment for new volunteers to come into.

We bolstered volunteer engagement by:

- Ensuring roles evolved to remain relevant and rewarding for individuals, recognising and valuing their dedication.
- Delivering free upskilling sessions in sewing and repair, from refresher workshops on sewing machines to advanced construction techniques.
- Providing additional training focused this year on shoe repair and cobbling, as well as garment upcycling, led by industry professionals.
- Offering subsidised access to arts and cultural events, linking volunteers' work for Gladrags with the projects and organisations we support.

Wellbeing

For many volunteers, Gladrags fulfils personal needs such as:

- Social interaction and building confidence.
- Acquiring new skills or sharing existing ones.
- Gaining general workplace experience or costume knowledge.
- Being immersed in a purposeful, creative environment.

We place high importance on fostering a sense of belonging and community within our volunteer team. This is essential both for individual wellbeing and for enabling the charity to deliver on its aims and objectives.

We provide opportunities for volunteers to connect meaningfully through their roles and social gatherings. This year's social events included a ceramics workshop, scrap-badge-making, themed quiz nights, and a backstage tour of the *Theatre Royal*. Celebrations during National Volunteer Week further acknowledged the immense contribution our volunteers make to Gladrags.

INCOME GENERATION

Having the ability to secure a regular source of revenue is key to Gladrags' organisational sustainability. Building unrestricted reserves enables us to maintain costume provision, support our team in the short term, and confidently plan for outreach and services over the longer term.

Our principal revenue model links costume hire fees directly to our resource provision. Beneficiaries, who account for 78% of our hire revenue, contribute a minimal fee to access costumes and resource boxes affordably. This subsidised service is balanced by higher hire fees charged to professionals and partygoers.

We boosted this in December 2024, by launching Party Boxes, curated collections of dress-up garments and accessories, which quickly became popular for Christmas and New Year celebrations.

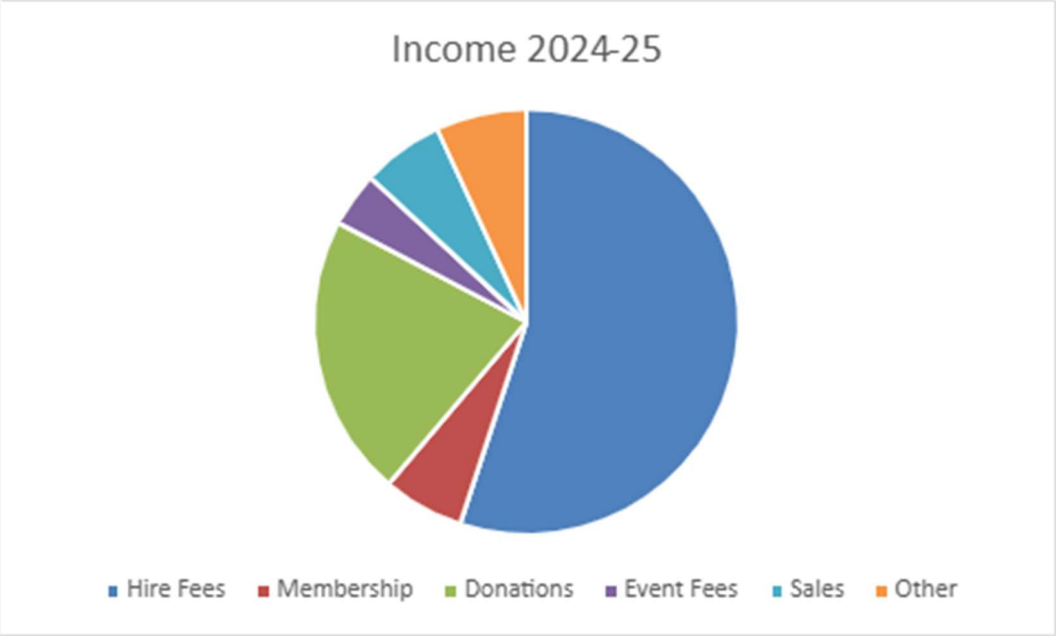
Collectively, hire revenue raised £53,116, representing nearly two-thirds of our total annual income of £85,036. Awareness of our high-quality stock for film and TV continued to grow, bringing in income from ITV, Channel 5, and several independent documentary producers.

This year presented challenges in grant and trust fundraising, which remain crucial to our capacity to deliver services and activities. Repeat funding from the Arnold Burton Trust was received shortly after the financial year-end and will be reflected in the 2025-26 accounts. This was somewhat balanced by continued funding from MF Mills reaching a high of £16,340, underscoring its importance.

We diversified our unrestricted income through several initiatives:

- Our third Winter Warmer Appeal raised £1,902, primarily from the general public, specifically supporting reminiscence activities aimed at combating loneliness among local people aged over 65.
- The return of the signature fundraiser Fast Forward Flashback, a 1970s-themed event combining an immersive, retro party with an auction, raised £1,864.
- Online and in-person Vintage Sales events generated £5,296 in revenue.

Our reserves dipped over the year, prompting Trustees and management to develop a revenue strategy for the coming year.



Section E Financial review

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

Gladrags holds reserves to:

- Cover essential core and operational costs.
- Support longer-term commitments and plans.
- Mitigate unforeseen circumstances.

Reserves are reviewed quarterly, with target minimums set at:

- £18,000 as a minimum to ensure optimal operational continuity.
- £8,000 as the bare minimum unrestricted reserves to guarantee organisational viability at any given time.

Section G Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s) H Butler

Full name(s) HEATHER BUTLER

Position	CHAIR TRUSTEES.	
Date	30. JAN 2026.	

Chris Tyler Accounting

Flat 24, Wellingtonia Court,
Laine Close, Brighton,
East Sussex, BN1 6TD, UK

GLADRAGS COMMUNITY COSTUME TRUST
(CHARITY NUMBER 1122704)

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF GLADRAGS COMMUNITY COSTUME TRUST FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 March 2025.

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in any material respect:

(i). accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or

(ii). the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

C R Tyler FCA; DChA; FCIE
Chartered Accountant
Flat 24 Wellingtonia Court,
Laine Close,
Brighton
East Sussex
BN1 6TD

Date: 23rd January 2026

GLADRAGS COMMUNITY COSTUME TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1122704

Accounts

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From	Period start date			To	Period end date		
	Day	Month	Year		Day	Month	Year
	1st	April	2023		31st	March	2024

Section A Reference and administration details

Charity name Gladrags Community Costume Trust

Other names charity is known by Gladrags Community Costume Resource

Registered charity number (if any) 1122704

Charity's principal address

Unit 10, Westergate Business Centre
Westergate Road
Brighton
Postcode BN2 4QN

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Heather Butler	Chair		Trustees
	John Adams	Treasurer		Trustees
3	Neil Border	Secretary		Trustees
4				

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

Vania Mills

Section B Structure, governance and management

Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document (eg. trust deed, constitution)	Trust Deed
How the charity is constituted (eg. trust, association, company)	Charitable Trust
Trustee selection methods (eg. appointed by, elected by)	Appointed by Trustees

Section C Objectives and activities

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

Educating the public in historical and world dress by providing low-cost costumes and related resources as an educational tool.

To advance education of the public by providing various costumes and related resources at low cost as an educational tool.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)

OVERVIEW:

Gladrags is a unique, eco-minded provider of costume resources and expertise which serve to further the activities of our beneficiary groups. Planet-friendly principles are key to our ethos: it is by virtue of both fostering and promoting the concept of re-using costumes since 1994 that we have built a resource of 10,000 items, 95% of which are donated stock that we repurpose and adapt to benefit the community time and time again.

We support and enrich the projects of our beneficiary groups by offering the following:

Affordable hire of pre-loved costumes and artefacts to organisations who would otherwise struggle to afford or have access to them.
Our beneficiary groups include:

- **Education:** schools, colleges, further and higher education
- **Arts:** amateur and fringe theatre, film and arts groups; professional theatre, film, heritage and arts organisations with a socially conscious remit
- **Community and wellbeing:** libraries, day centres; community and youth groups; charities and not-for-profits

Principal resources are:

- historical, world dress and show costumes and accessories for children and adults, suited particularly to educational practice, performance, wellbeing projects and community arts.

resource boxes: costumes and artefacts tailored to a specific project or theme, most commonly to support primary school topics, promoting 'historical-detective' work and role-play activities.

reminiscence boxes: containing authentic vintage clothing and everyday memorabilia, selected to fit an era or theme.

Reminiscence and heritage resources that support memory-sharing activities, within a context of wellbeing. Primarily we provide reminiscence boxes, vintage clothing and artefacts for:

- heritage exhibitions and activities.

- reminiscence sessions and interactive activities for older people experiencing isolation, including those living with dementia and Alzheimer's.

Store visits that offer educational or wellbeing support including:

- nurture visits for children, young people and adults who experience additional disadvantage, exploring the role of costume as part of a project's process and gaining experiential access to culture and the arts
- mentoring of school pupils and university students with drama or costume based assignments and projects

Costume-making resources:

- Sewing equipment and recycled fabrics to resource user groups' own costume-making projects and encourage sustainable practice.
- Library collection: referencing historical dress of ordinary people; world and cultural dress; affordable, local costume resources.

Rehome-it! Scheme:

Surplus costumes, props and textiles are donated back to the community, with a focus on:

- reaching schools, colleges, community arts groups and low-income families.
- further completing the cycle of donations to Gladrags, an estimated 1 tonne annually, and mitigating textile waste by rehoming an estimated 1.2 tonnes annually.

COMMUNITY:

Through our Community Outreach Programme we reach further groups and individuals who experience disadvantage and isolation. In response to the increasing cost-of-living crisis, we particularly focus on partnering with food security projects to deliver the following:

Creative dress-up activities designed to encourage a sense of play for children and families experiencing life challenges. Costume inspires the creation of characters, scenarios and social interaction, whereby children stretch their imaginations and live out their dreams and hopes.

Reminiscence sessions with older people who come together to be socially active, often as a means of combating social isolation. Our sessions contribute to their wellbeing with:

- themed memory boxes that ignite the meaningful sharing of past experiences
- vintage and fancy-dress photo-booths that encourage playful activity and a reminder of the sense of fun that can be had at any stage of life

VOLUNTEERS:

The volunteer team support the running of all our operations, which we could not deliver effectively without them. They are therefore instrumental in determining our capacity to reach more beneficiaries and to deliver on the organisation's aims and objectives. We support a diverse community of 60-70 volunteers annually, and we continue to provide opportunities for people with a range of learning and support needs, tailoring roles to their interests and aspirations. We provide training opportunities and supported-work placements within the organisation that build and maintain self-confidence or support specific pathways into the creative arts industry and general employment.

Trustees have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)

SUSTAINABILITY:

Environmental sustainability frames our aims and objectives, with the re-use of resources at the core of our ethos and the services we offer, as well as being integral to the communication of key organisational values. Our long-standing commitment to be part of the solution to a sustainable textile industry and our planet-friendly practices influence organisations and individuals and ensure that our own carbon footprint remains minimal.

Our hire-not-buy service encourages a consumer ethos of accessing high quality pre-loved garments versus cheaply bought and unethically made ones. The 10,000 costumes we share with our local communities predominantly comprise donated and recycled stock, some of which is further adapted by us for a longer life or a wider range of purposes. We encourage beneficiary groups to gift their un-used costumes to Gladrags to re-share these within our communities. The free costume-making support and recycled materials we offer groups further promotes sustainable costume practice.

Our Rehome-it! scheme brings together our principles of minimal waste with opportunities to provide additional support to the charities, schools and community projects who benefit from the scheme.

n ethos of wider participation and social inclusion is key to the delivery of and access to our services and our organisational purpose is sustained by this focus.

Consequently, we are committed to reaching communities experiencing disadvantage and isolation and achieve this further through our own outreach projects.

We actively recruit, support, and develop volunteers with wide-ranging skills and learning needs and celebrate the inclusivity of our team as an organisational asset. The wellbeing of our volunteers and staff is paramount to Gladrags' sustainability, and the longevity of service from many in our team is testament to this.

Section D Achievements and performance

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

PROVISION OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

Gladrags reached 10, 300 beneficiaries in 2023-24, by supplying costumes and related resources to projects they participated in or attended. An increased reach of 1,800 beneficiaries on the previous year, we contributed to the following:

- Education: complementing interactive approaches to learning, in particular adding context to social history or world cultures; creating access opportunities to arts and culture in an educational context.
- Sustainability: promoting a planet-friendly approach to costume, clothing and fashion; responsibly re-homing costumes and textiles within our local community; resourcing climate-focussed initiatives.
- Health and well-being: stimulating and nurturing memory, imagination, creativity and play within our outreach sessions. Providing activities that specifically promote positive mental health and wellbeing, and that develop self-confidence and awareness of personal abilities.
- Community cohesion: bringing people together through live arts events and shared creative activities that encourage sociability and community connection.
- Celebration: adding colour and magic to performance-based projects, theatre and film, social and cultural events.

COSTUME PROVISION

Education

Overall increased uptake of our resource boxes enabled interactive approaches to learning with artefacts and costume that, for example:

- brought history to life for pupils learning about topics such as Anglo-Saxons at *Southway School* and *St Luke's Primary*, to Evacuees at *Stanford Juniors* and *West Park Primary*, or key historical figures such as Henry VIII at *Bevendean Primary* and local suffragette Mary Clark as part of *Brighton Dome*'s heritage schools' tour.
- gave context to world cultures for children learning about African art at *Bevendean Primary* and Chinese New Year at *Coombe Rd School.*
- enhanced educational experience with a kinesthetic approach, particularly suited to children and young people with special education needs such as a Viking's re-enactment at *Moulsecoomb Primary School*, and an aspiration-focused cooking video for a young person supported by *Sense Learning.*

Meetings with the *Poverty Proofing in Schools Network* inspired us to offer the following free provision to schools for World Book Day in March 2024:

- World Book Day boxes, containing classic children's fairytale and literary character costumes to assist schools in providing outfits for children whose families were not able to support them in this global celebration.
- Working alongside *Leftover Threads* (a partner in our newly formed *Textile Re-use Hub*) we ran a free World Book Day costume-making workshop, whereby surplus textiles and items for rehome were refashioned into book character costumes, helping low-income families navigate the well-documented stress of taking part in school dress-up days.

Our mentoring of college and university students with costume or production responsibilities linked to their courses extended further, including:

- Student group visits and styling sessions for film students at *Brighton Screen and Film School* and costume students at *Northbrook University.*
- Costume advice sessions for performing arts students at *East Sussex College*, selecting outfits for their Sussex-wide theatre in education Pantomime tour to 14 local schools

Arts Access

Promoting and resourcing wider participation in community-led arts is at the centre of our subsidised costume hire ethos. It enabled the creative vision of a broad range of projects, including:

- performances that promoted wide-reaching creative experience for first-time performers such as *Coldean Primary School*'s staging of *Mary Poppins* involving every school pupil, and *Brighton People's Theatre's* show *Born and Bread* devised and performed by a community cast.
- live arts that championed the rights of young people with a learning disability to flourish such as the theatre shows at *St John's College* and *Woodlandsmeed School*, and the stage and screen output of aspiring professional performers at *Different Planet Arts* and *Carousel.*
- community Pantomimes in the heart of rural Sussex communities by amateur societies such as *Ringmer Drama*, *Henfield Theatre* and *Weald Panto.*

The transformative nature of costume plays a pivotal role in projects that look to the arts as a means of nurturing wellbeing and bringing communities together. In 2023-24 these included:

- provision of safe, fun, creative space to explore gender identity and gender expression with *Brighton Youth Centre*'s drag workshops and *Kidzone*'s drag storytelling for children

- wellbeing and acknowledgement events for Brighton & Hove's *Children In Care Council*
- 1920s-style Christmas Dinner hosted by young teenagers *at the Crew Club* for their local elders in Whitehawk
- sensitive festive celebrations held by staff and volunteers at *Martlets Hospice Care* and *Kennedy Street Recovery Cafe*

Our Place, Brighton Festival's flagship community initiative ran for its third year in Moulsecoomb and Bevendean. Gladrags led again in artistic liaison and support to the initiative's artists in residence, East Side Print, and as part of a local steering committee oversaw their free festival workshops and final community event for neighbourhood residents who have less opportunities to access arts and culture. We again engaged our volunteer team in fulfilling creative output by producing a collection of textile greetings postcards in the range of languages that reflected the diversity of our team, contributing to the project's 'Say Hello' theme. Alongside block-printed postcards created by schools and community groups, these 500b 'hello' and 'welcome' messages in different languages were screen-printed on to community banners and cushions for local venues.

Heritage:

Walk the Chalk

Spotlighting the King Charles III Coast Path, this large-scale multi-disciplinary five-day event in Cuckmere Haven celebrated local heritage, history, natural environment and folklore through art and creativity. Gladrags collaborated with LYT Productions, taking on the costume design and wardrobe for the 100-strong cast of community volunteers, ensuring they could convincingly recreate an Iron Age settlement and a Smugglers Lair, along with WW1 and WW2 outposts. This also enabled us to provide styling, design and wardrobe mentoring opportunities for our volunteers, supporting their pathways into professional costume work.

Brighton Dome

Supporting the Dome's free access events, Gladrags resourced dress-up corners and workshops that evoked key moments in the venue's performance history, inviting guests to step in the shoes of pop-stars such as Pink Floyd, David Bowie and Abba or re-imagine staged Pantomimes and Fairytales of decades past. Furthermore we curated resource boxes of authentic artefacts and accessories for their *Full of Surprises* schools outreach tour, featuring key figures in the Dome's social and event history.

Food Security

With the cost-of-living an increasing concern nationally and locally, we provided support and subsidised costume packages for projects bridging the food poverty gap by:

- supporting theatre company *One Fell Swoop* for the third year running in their efforts to raise funds for *Fareshare Sussex,* the surplus food redistribution charity. By providing 200 costumes for free and assisting with costume design for their *Shakespeare Unlocked* festival we resourced a series of outdoor Shakespeare plays and boosted the company's fundraising capability.

- providing food themed dress-up tents for *Very Local Food Hubs and Cooking Good's* free, educational community events in Moulsecoomb and Bevendean, celebrating sustainable, affordable food.

- fully subsidising *Lewes Foodbank*, who saw volunteers fundraising by dressing up to create awareness of their cause and raise vital funds.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

Our 15-years' experience of delivering outreach programmes reaches low-income communities who have few opportunities for outings and social interaction. With a focus on East Brighton, we reach children, families and older people who live in areas that fall within the 10% most deprived parts of the UK, as defined by the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Family Sessions

Our programme enables us to reach people most in need by bringing the transformational nature of our dress-up activities into the heart of communities experiencing disadvantage and hardship. We invite families to be socially active together via interactive dress-up play. The results are:

- children stretch their imaginations and are active in their play.
- children feel safe in expressing themselves creatively or discovering unique identities through the lens of the 'new me' that character dress-up can offer.
- families experience the freedom and fun that dress-up play offers and have an opportunity to step out of sometimes very challenging life situations.

In response to the ever-increasing cost-of-living crisis, we were able to grow the scope of our family outreach sessions. Building on the previous success of our partnership work with 3 local food poverty initiatives: *CHOMP Moulsecoomb*, *Bevendean CHOMP*, and the *Bevy Pub's kids club* we expanded our reach by collaborating with an additional 5 community food partners. We identified a joint vision to bring people together to share nutritious food and explore creative, interactive activity. By addressing wellbeing and food provision together we could give families the experience of a 'day out', with respite from sometimes

very tough daily lives and opportunities for joyful, sociable family fun. This expansion of family outreach enabled us to provide dress-up activities to:

- established free holiday meal clubs run by *Bevendean CHOMP* and *CHOMP Central*, in Whitehawk, Hangleton and Central Brighton for people receiving free school meals or on low incomes.
- new free initiatives such as community cook-a-long sessions in Moulsecoomb and Bevendean with *Cooking Good*, intergenerational family fun days in Whitehawk with *Robert Lodge 50+ group* and *Fire and Feast* events in Bevendean with *Fernee Forest Club*.

Furthermore we piloted a series of collaborative Christmas family sessions with these existing partners in Moulsecoomb and Bevendean, jointly increasing our reach to the most vulnerable families in the area by 35%. Families were able to enjoy a roast dinner and a range of festive activities, with Gladrags supplying Christmas dress-up, building a Santa's Grotto and arranging a special visit from Father Christmas himself.

The momentum we built from this and the incoming requests for our provision led to the roll out of our commitment for 2024 to deliver 30 free community dress-up sessions as a meaningful way to celebrate our organisation's 30th anniversary.

Reaching older people

We ran a final event with *Chatterboxes*, the social group for elderly residents of Moulsecoomb and Bevendean. We all celebrated in style with a coronation reminiscence session and festive lunch, with regal dress up and many a tale of previous coronations shared, sparked by historical memorabilia. Having partnered with *The Bevy* pub to set up this post-pandemic initiative, the group's activities became absorbed into an existing seniors club, changing their needs regarding the suitability of our provision. We stayed connected with the group and invited them to community events that proactively engaged different generations.

We began a re-evaluation of the need and potential reach of our provision, consulting with local advisors *Trust in Developing Communities* as well as a local reminiscence consultant. We identified two potential new elders' groups to engage with in Moulsecoomb and Whitehawk and began planning taster sessions for Spring 2024.

SCOPE OF BENEFICIARIES

We maintained our aim to prioritise reaching both children and adults most in need by:

- continuing to tailor our resources to suit the individual needs of educational and community projects addressing disadvantage.
- maintaining the same level of costume provision subsidy to our beneficiaries (unchanged for groups most in need since 2010).

- delivering our community outreach programme in partnership with food security organisations in the most deprived areas of our city.

We increased our reach to new beneficiary-groups by:

- pro-actively engaging with local schools, community groups and the local arts sector.

- promoting our resource provision beyond Brighton through a consistent online presence on social media platforms that celebrated our mission and gave a platform to our beneficiary groups.

New beneficiaries included:

- *Ditchling Primary* and *Carden Primary schools,* who benefitted from resource boxes and costumes for Stunning Starts, whereby teachers introduce new topics innovatively at the start of the school term

- *Haywards Heath College* and *Cavendish School* who were able to costume casts of over 50 students and add authenticity to their staging of era-specific musicals *Made in Dagenham* and *Little Women*.

- Amateur arts groups such as *Eastbourne Gilbert and Sullivan*, *Arundel Players* and *Wings Youth Theatre* who were able to affordably supplement their own wardrobe collections and avoid hiring full show sets unnecessarily.
- Emerging professional theatre companies *Cue Fanfare* and *Rabbit in the Headlights* who accessed high quality costumes at discounted rates, producing professional quality productions despite very low budgets.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

Brighton Textile Reuse Hub

Gladrags' invitation to like-minded sustainable organisations to further common goals boosted our combined ability to implement a waste-free approach to textile resources. This resulted in the launch of the *Textile Reuse Hub* in November 2023, a dynamic and growing collaboration between Gladrags, *Leftover Threads*, garment upcycling specialists and *Smarter Uniforms* who collect and redistribute school uniform.

By pooling our resources, community networks and experience, we promote and facilitate textile reuse with shared aims to:

- increase the reuse and circulation of existing textiles in the local area.
- support individuals impacted by the rising cost of living, by encouraging the use of second-hand or repurposed clothing and providing assistance with repairs.
- raise awareness of the environmental impact of textile waste and the importance of sustainable practices.

With support from *East Brighton Trust,* we established an operational base from which the Gladrags Rehome-it! Scheme was able to flourish. This initiative redistributes our surplus costumes and textiles for free within the Sussex community, especially to schools, colleges and grassroots community groups. It prompts us to assess the relevance and usage of our existing costume collections, and to pass on items donated to Gladrags that are more suited to other projects.

The Rehome-it! Scheme acts as an important extension to our hire-not-buy service and aligns with local and UK-wide ambitions for a circular economy, all contributing to the *Brighton and Hove City Council*'s objective of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030.

Rehome-it!:

Our Rehome-it! scheme began in March 2023 and gained significant traction into 2024 with consistent promotion, fostering relationships with key audiences and operating the scheme from the Textile Reuse Hub premises. We engaged with 40 groups across the year and repurposed 1,250 items in the following ways:

- Store visits for individual groups that provided:
  - → warm street wear for the clothing hub run by *First Base Day Centre* for homeless people
  - → fabric remnants, a sewing machine and haberdashery kit to resource the new community sewing group at *Bristol Estate Tenant's Association Hub*.
  - → children's dressing up costumes to support *Moulsecoomb Primary School*'s Opal scheme, boosting imaginative free play activities in breaktimes.
- Running four Rehome-it! Open Days with attendees including: Textile and Arts faculty students from *Varndean School*, *Brighton MET college* and *Northbrook University*; textile teachers from *BHASVIC* and *Blatchington Mill Schools*, and community groups *Art Space* and *Far Far Away Musical Group*.
- Hosting a Rehome-it! Facebook group to facilitate direct item exchanges between members and promote external bulk rehoming opportunities. The platform also facilitates the connection between groups, allowing them to share and exchange ideas for reusing and repurposing items.
- Delivering a three-day eco residency at *Brighton MET college* where we rehomed 334 items alone and engaged students in our mission to mitigate textile waste with a sustainability presentation.
- Rehoming to families in need via outreach activities, including gifting over 70 Halloween costume items for trick or treating fun, and nearly 100 dress-up items as part of a Christmas pop-up 'rehome' collective we steered with *Smarter Uniforms*, *CHOMP Brighton* and *Very Local Food Hubs*. Families were able to move into the festive season with gifted stocking presents, holiday dressing-up costumes, school uniform essentials and fruit & veg boxes.

Sustainability Placements:

Since introducing our Revive to Rewear programme in March 2023, we supported 12 volunteers through our textile sustainability placements across the year, supporting pathways to further education and employment for young people and those stepping back into the workplace. These placements offer volunteers with diverse learning needs the opportunity to develop their knowledge of sustainable

textile practices in action, whilst equally supporting our in-house costume provision and community outreach work. Key benefits for the volunteers who took part were:

- acquiring practical skills such as customer service, repair and upcycling techniques, costume styling and garment repurposing, framed within both sustainability and industry knowledge.

- achieving learning objectives, evidenced by certification, relevant to the modern world of work where implementing sustainability practices are increasingly important.

- becoming confident ambassadors of our approach to reducing apparel waste through our hire-not-buy costume service and broader sector initiatives to combat fast fashion.

Vintage Sales

The selling of our vintage stock is a means of repurposing sellable items and dress fabrics less relevant to the beneficiary groups accessing our Re-home-it! scheme. Via our online and in-person sales we are able to:

- align our circular fashion ethos by using the re-sale of clothing to fund our mission, serving beneficiary groups in Sussex.
- promote the purchase of second-hand clothing and be actively part of the solution to textile waste.

A shift in public awareness and attitudes to the perils of fast fashion has enabled us to reach new audiences seeking to reduce their personal impact on textile waste and opt out of 'purchasing new'.

We experienced lower-level online sales than in previous years through Vinted and E-bay, reflected in market trends, with a return to high street shopping post-pandemic. This led us to:

- channel further stock into mini outlets, via established Vintage clothing shops: *Up North, Department* and *Showgirl Vintage* as well as selling direct to vintage traders.

- expand our pop-up sales, a particular highlight being our participation in the first ever city-wide event for *Sustainable Fashion Week*. At the two-day marketplace we were able to showcase our entire vintage apparel for sale as well as a collection of 'repair and refashion' clothing. In addition to raising over £1000 revenue, this gave us a meaningful platform to engage with our city's circular fashion conscious community and promote our environmental mission.

VOLUNTEERS:

Opportunities:

Over the course of the year, 69 volunteers helped us to maintain our resources, deliver activities and serve our beneficiaries and we welcomed 37 new volunteers to the team.

We provided volunteer opportunities for people with a range of learning, social and career needs, including:

- 12 certificated textile sustainability placements to support pathways into further education or employment
- 3 student module placements and 9 work experience placements for school pupils
- 5 supported workplace opportunities for people with learning disabilities, and volunteer roles for 7 people with mental health needs
- 7 further roles for school and university students

Progression:

For some, volunteering at Gladrags is a stepping-stone on professional or personal journeys, bolstering portfolios and fostering self-confidence. We maintained our commitment to supporting this with tailored volunteering roles and signposting volunteers to relevant arts internships and progression opportunities. Since working with us in 2023-24:

- 2 volunteers gained the experience they needed to apply for prestigious internship schemes.
- 5 volunteers boosted their portfolios and styling experience to support their career paths in theatre design, costume in film and costume construction.
- 3 recent graduates gained invaluable work experience and the confidence to reach paid positions in wardrobe, box office management, and events.

Engagement:

For others still their contribution to Gladrags is an integral part of their life, and by March 2024, 6 volunteers in our team had been with us for over 12 years; another 8 for over 5 years. We are proud of the strength and experience this maintains in our team and the safe and welcoming environment this offers for new volunteers to come into. We bolstered volunteer engagement by:

- ensuring that volunteers' roles evolved according to what was relevant and rewarding for them individually and ensuring that their effort and dedication was valued by the organisation.
- delivering free upskilling initiatives in sewing and repair, from refresher machine sewing workshops, to more advanced technique sessions.
- providing additional training and skills development with a particular focus this year on millinery repair and restoration, conducted by an industry professional, and 1:1 beginner sewing sessions with volunteers under 21 and volunteers with additional needs.

- offering subsidised access to arts and culture events, acknowledging the link between volunteers' work for Gladrags and the projects and organisations we resource.

Wellbeing

For most, volunteering with Gladrags also fulfils a personal need, such as:

- social interaction and building confidence
- acquiring new skills or sharing existing ones
- gaining general workplace experience or costume knowledge
- being immersed and purposeful in a creative environment

We place high importance on a sense of belonging and community within our volunteer team and recognise how important this is to ensure that individual volunteers feel valued and equally that the charity can deliver on its aims and

objectives. We provide opportunities both within volunteering roles and via social gatherings for volunteers to connect meaningfully with each other and with the organisation. We organise a range of social events throughout the year and during National Volunteer's Week that acknowledge the immense difference our volunteers make to Gladrags' ability to deliver on its aims and objectives.

INCOME GENERATION

Having the ability to raise our own regular source of revenue is key to our organisational sustainability, building unrestricted reserves that ensure we are able to maintain our costume provision and support our team in the immediate term as well as plan costume outreach and services in the longer-term.

Our principal revenue model links costume hire fees directly to our resource provision: beneficiaries, who make up 78% of our hire revenue, contribute at a very minimal level in order to loan costumes and resource boxes affordably; this service is then subsidised by the top-rate hire fees paid by professionals and partygoers. Collectively this raised £53,200, over half our annual income of £101,300. Our evolving relationships with professional costume designers and stylists boosted hire revenue and a growing awareness of our stock quality for film and TV brought us business and revenue from the BBC, ITV and Channel 5.

Income from grants and significant donors are equally crucial to our capacity to deliver services and activities to our beneficiaries. Repeat funding from *Arnold Burton Trust, MF Mills, The Brian Mitchell Charitable Settlement* and *East Brighton Trust* was boosted by a new grant from *Brighton and Hove city Council,* collectively bringing £32,700 to the organisation.

Our Winter Warmer Appeal raised over £3000, largely from the general public, to specifically support our dress-up provision for community food initiatives and grassroots arts projects, whilst £5,900 revenue from Vintage Sales and events further boosted our unrestricted income.

Section E Financial review

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves	The charity holds reserves to ensure that: essential core and operational costs can be covered; longer term plans can be committed to; unforeseen circumstances can be mitigated. Reserves are reviewed quarterly; £18,000 is the rolling minimum reserve limit per quarter to enable optimum operational continuity; £8000 the bare minimum unrestricted reserves at any one time to ensure viability.

Section G Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s) H Butler

Full name(s) HEATHER BUTLER

Position	CHAIRPERSON	
Date	31.1.25	

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name: Gladrags Community Costume Trust | Charity No. / Company No.

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from 04/01/2023 To 31/3/2024

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Designated funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Hire Fees	53,219	-	-	53,219	45,976
Membership	4,290	-	-	4,290	4,250
Grants		23,250	-	23,250	22,000
Donations	1,001		11,701	12,702	11,406
Gift Aid Claims	333	-	1,067	1,400	1,145
Employment Allowance	-	-	-	-	-
Event Fees	1,980	-	-	1,980	2,065
Sales	3,892	-	-	3,892	5,711
Other	568	-	-	568	910
Sub total *(Gross income for AR)*	65,284	23,250	12,768	101,302	93,463
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	65,284	23,250	12,768	101,302	93,463
A3 Payments					
Premises (rent,business rates)		4,903	-	4,903	4,000
Insurance		1,343	-	1,343	747
Office,Utilities & Maintenance	1,659	6,385	589	8,633	6,982
Equipment	771	580	-	1,351	394
Staff & Volunteers	34,275	1,693	800	36,767	33,707
Workshops	26	11	111	148	-
Sessional Fees	32,127	9,127	7,533	48,787	38,658
PR & Communications	-	-	-	-	168
Professional Fees	-	-	600	600	810
Stock & Stock Care	1,026	48	-	1,075	1,471
Sales & Fundraising	139			139	277
Misc	83		-	83	316
Training	-	989	-	989	-
Sub total	70,106	25,079	9,633	104,818	87,529
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	70,106	25,079	9,633	104,818	87,529
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 4,823	- 1,829	3,135	- 3,516	5,934
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	38,294	21,767	9,561	69,622	63,687
Cash funds this year end	33,471	19,938	12,696	66,106	69,622

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Designated funds to nearest £
	Bank less amounts due	33,471	19,938	12,696

B1 Cash funds

	-	-	-
	-	-	-
Total cash funds	33,471	19,938	12,696

(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))

B2 Other monetary assets

Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
	-	-	-

B3 Investment assets

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-

B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-

B5 Liabilities

Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
Independent Examination	Unrestricted	600	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
J Reid	Heather Butler	31.1.25

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From	Period start date			To	Period end date		
	Day	Month	Year		Day	Month	Year
	1st	April	2023		31st	March	2024

Section A Reference and administration details

Charity name Gladrags Community Costume Trust

Other names charity is known by Gladrags Community Costume Resource

Registered charity number (if any) 1122704

Charity's principal address

Unit 10, Westergate Business Centre
Westergate Road
Brighton
Postcode BN2 4QN

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Heather Butler	Chair		Trustees
	John Adams	Treasurer		Trustees
3	Neil Border	Secretary		Trustees
4				

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

Vania Mills

Section B Structure, governance and management

Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document (eg. trust deed, constitution)	Trust Deed
How the charity is constituted (eg. trust, association, company)	Charitable Trust
Trustee selection methods (eg. appointed by, elected by)	Appointed by Trustees

Section C Objectives and activities

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

Educating the public in historical and world dress by providing low-cost costumes and related resources as an educational tool.

To advance education of the public by providing various costumes and related resources at low cost as an educational tool.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)

OVERVIEW:

Gladrags is a unique, eco-minded provider of costume resources and expertise which serve to further the activities of our beneficiary groups. Planet-friendly principles are key to our ethos: it is by virtue of both fostering and promoting the concept of re-using costumes since 1994 that we have built a resource of 10,000 items, 95% of which are donated stock that we repurpose and adapt to benefit the community time and time again.

We support and enrich the projects of our beneficiary groups by offering the following:

Affordable hire of pre-loved costumes and artefacts to organisations who would otherwise struggle to afford or have access to them.
Our beneficiary groups include:

- **Education:** schools, colleges, further and higher education
- **Arts:** amateur and fringe theatre, film and arts groups; professional theatre, film, heritage and arts organisations with a socially conscious remit
- **Community and wellbeing:** libraries, day centres; community and youth groups; charities and not-for-profits

Principal resources are:

- historical, world dress and show costumes and accessories for children and adults, suited particularly to educational practice, performance, wellbeing projects and community arts.

resource boxes: costumes and artefacts tailored to a specific project or theme, most commonly to support primary school topics, promoting 'historical-detective' work and role-play activities.

reminiscence boxes: containing authentic vintage clothing and everyday memorabilia, selected to fit an era or theme.

Reminiscence and heritage resources that support memory-sharing activities, within a context of wellbeing. Primarily we provide reminiscence boxes, vintage clothing and artefacts for:

- heritage exhibitions and activities.

- reminiscence sessions and interactive activities for older people experiencing isolation, including those living with dementia and Alzheimer's.

Store visits that offer educational or wellbeing support including:

- nurture visits for children, young people and adults who experience additional disadvantage, exploring the role of costume as part of a project's process and gaining experiential access to culture and the arts
- mentoring of school pupils and university students with drama or costume based assignments and projects

Costume-making resources:

- Sewing equipment and recycled fabrics to resource user groups' own costume-making projects and encourage sustainable practice.
- Library collection: referencing historical dress of ordinary people; world and cultural dress; affordable, local costume resources.

Rehome-it! Scheme:

Surplus costumes, props and textiles are donated back to the community, with a focus on:

- reaching schools, colleges, community arts groups and low-income families.
- further completing the cycle of donations to Gladrags, an estimated 1 tonne annually, and mitigating textile waste by rehoming an estimated 1.2 tonnes annually.

COMMUNITY:

Through our Community Outreach Programme we reach further groups and individuals who experience disadvantage and isolation. In response to the increasing cost-of-living crisis, we particularly focus on partnering with food security projects to deliver the following:

Creative dress-up activities designed to encourage a sense of play for children and families experiencing life challenges. Costume inspires the creation of characters, scenarios and social interaction, whereby children stretch their imaginations and live out their dreams and hopes.

Reminiscence sessions with older people who come together to be socially active, often as a means of combating social isolation. Our sessions contribute to their wellbeing with:

- themed memory boxes that ignite the meaningful sharing of past experiences
- vintage and fancy-dress photo-booths that encourage playful activity and a reminder of the sense of fun that can be had at any stage of life

VOLUNTEERS:

The volunteer team support the running of all our operations, which we could not deliver effectively without them. They are therefore instrumental in determining our capacity to reach more beneficiaries and to deliver on the organisation's aims and objectives. We support a diverse community of 60-70 volunteers annually, and we continue to provide opportunities for people with a range of learning and support needs, tailoring roles to their interests and aspirations. We provide training opportunities and supported-work placements within the organisation that build and maintain self-confidence or support specific pathways into the creative arts industry and general employment.

Trustees have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)

SUSTAINABILITY:

Environmental sustainability frames our aims and objectives, with the re-use of resources at the core of our ethos and the services we offer, as well as being integral to the communication of key organisational values. Our long-standing commitment to be part of the solution to a sustainable textile industry and our planet-friendly practices influence organisations and individuals and ensure that our own carbon footprint remains minimal.

Our hire-not-buy service encourages a consumer ethos of accessing high quality pre-loved garments versus cheaply bought and unethically made ones. The 10,000 costumes we share with our local communities predominantly comprise donated and recycled stock, some of which is further adapted by us for a longer life or a wider range of purposes. We encourage beneficiary groups to gift their un-used costumes to Gladrags to re-share these within our communities. The free costume-making support and recycled materials we offer groups further promotes sustainable costume practice.

Our Rehome-it! scheme brings together our principles of minimal waste with opportunities to provide additional support to the charities, schools and community projects who benefit from the scheme.

n ethos of wider participation and social inclusion is key to the delivery of and access to our services and our organisational purpose is sustained by this focus.

Consequently, we are committed to reaching communities experiencing disadvantage and isolation and achieve this further through our own outreach projects.

We actively recruit, support, and develop volunteers with wide-ranging skills and learning needs and celebrate the inclusivity of our team as an organisational asset. The wellbeing of our volunteers and staff is paramount to Gladrags' sustainability, and the longevity of service from many in our team is testament to this.

Section D Achievements and performance

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

PROVISION OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

Gladrags reached 10, 300 beneficiaries in 2023-24, by supplying costumes and related resources to projects they participated in or attended. An increased reach of 1,800 beneficiaries on the previous year, we contributed to the following:

- Education: complementing interactive approaches to learning, in particular adding context to social history or world cultures; creating access opportunities to arts and culture in an educational context.
- Sustainability: promoting a planet-friendly approach to costume, clothing and fashion; responsibly re-homing costumes and textiles within our local community; resourcing climate-focussed initiatives.
- Health and well-being: stimulating and nurturing memory, imagination, creativity and play within our outreach sessions. Providing activities that specifically promote positive mental health and wellbeing, and that develop self-confidence and awareness of personal abilities.
- Community cohesion: bringing people together through live arts events and shared creative activities that encourage sociability and community connection.
- Celebration: adding colour and magic to performance-based projects, theatre and film, social and cultural events.

COSTUME PROVISION

Education

Overall increased uptake of our resource boxes enabled interactive approaches to learning with artefacts and costume that, for example:

- brought history to life for pupils learning about topics such as Anglo-Saxons at *Southway School* and *St Luke's Primary*, to Evacuees at *Stanford Juniors* and *West Park Primary*, or key historical figures such as Henry VIII at *Bevendean Primary* and local suffragette Mary Clark as part of *Brighton Dome*'s heritage schools' tour.
- gave context to world cultures for children learning about African art at *Bevendean Primary* and Chinese New Year at *Coombe Rd School.*
- enhanced educational experience with a kinesthetic approach, particularly suited to children and young people with special education needs such as a Viking's re-enactment at *Moulsecoomb Primary School*, and an aspiration-focused cooking video for a young person supported by *Sense Learning.*

Meetings with the *Poverty Proofing in Schools Network* inspired us to offer the following free provision to schools for World Book Day in March 2024:

- World Book Day boxes, containing classic children's fairytale and literary character costumes to assist schools in providing outfits for children whose families were not able to support them in this global celebration.
- Working alongside *Leftover Threads* (a partner in our newly formed *Textile Re-use Hub*) we ran a free World Book Day costume-making workshop, whereby surplus textiles and items for rehome were refashioned into book character costumes, helping low-income families navigate the well-documented stress of taking part in school dress-up days.

Our mentoring of college and university students with costume or production responsibilities linked to their courses extended further, including:

- Student group visits and styling sessions for film students at *Brighton Screen and Film School* and costume students at *Northbrook University.*
- Costume advice sessions for performing arts students at *East Sussex College*, selecting outfits for their Sussex-wide theatre in education Pantomime tour to 14 local schools

Arts Access

Promoting and resourcing wider participation in community-led arts is at the centre of our subsidised costume hire ethos. It enabled the creative vision of a broad range of projects, including:

- performances that promoted wide-reaching creative experience for first-time performers such as *Coldean Primary School*'s staging of *Mary Poppins* involving every school pupil, and *Brighton People's Theatre's* show *Born and Bread* devised and performed by a community cast.
- live arts that championed the rights of young people with a learning disability to flourish such as the theatre shows at *St John's College* and *Woodlandsmeed School*, and the stage and screen output of aspiring professional performers at *Different Planet Arts* and *Carousel.*
- community Pantomimes in the heart of rural Sussex communities by amateur societies such as *Ringmer Drama*, *Henfield Theatre* and *Weald Panto.*

The transformative nature of costume plays a pivotal role in projects that look to the arts as a means of nurturing wellbeing and bringing communities together. In 2023-24 these included:

- provision of safe, fun, creative space to explore gender identity and gender expression with *Brighton Youth Centre*'s drag workshops and *Kidzone*'s drag storytelling for children

- wellbeing and acknowledgement events for Brighton & Hove's *Children In Care Council*
- 1920s-style Christmas Dinner hosted by young teenagers *at the Crew Club* for their local elders in Whitehawk
- sensitive festive celebrations held by staff and volunteers at *Martlets Hospice Care* and *Kennedy Street Recovery Cafe*

Our Place, Brighton Festival's flagship community initiative ran for its third year in Moulsecoomb and Bevendean. Gladrags led again in artistic liaison and support to the initiative's artists in residence, East Side Print, and as part of a local steering committee oversaw their free festival workshops and final community event for neighbourhood residents who have less opportunities to access arts and culture. We again engaged our volunteer team in fulfilling creative output by producing a collection of textile greetings postcards in the range of languages that reflected the diversity of our team, contributing to the project's 'Say Hello' theme. Alongside block-printed postcards created by schools and community groups, these 500b 'hello' and 'welcome' messages in different languages were screen-printed on to community banners and cushions for local venues.

Heritage:

Walk the Chalk

Spotlighting the King Charles III Coast Path, this large-scale multi-disciplinary five-day event in Cuckmere Haven celebrated local heritage, history, natural environment and folklore through art and creativity. Gladrags collaborated with LYT Productions, taking on the costume design and wardrobe for the 100-strong cast of community volunteers, ensuring they could convincingly recreate an Iron Age settlement and a Smugglers Lair, along with WW1 and WW2 outposts. This also enabled us to provide styling, design and wardrobe mentoring opportunities for our volunteers, supporting their pathways into professional costume work.

Brighton Dome

Supporting the Dome's free access events, Gladrags resourced dress-up corners and workshops that evoked key moments in the venue's performance history, inviting guests to step in the shoes of pop-stars such as Pink Floyd, David Bowie and Abba or re-imagine staged Pantomimes and Fairytales of decades past. Furthermore we curated resource boxes of authentic artefacts and accessories for their *Full of Surprises* schools outreach tour, featuring key figures in the Dome's social and event history.

Food Security

With the cost-of-living an increasing concern nationally and locally, we provided support and subsidised costume packages for projects bridging the food poverty gap by:

- supporting theatre company *One Fell Swoop* for the third year running in their efforts to raise funds for *Fareshare Sussex,* the surplus food redistribution charity. By providing 200 costumes for free and assisting with costume design for their *Shakespeare Unlocked* festival we resourced a series of outdoor Shakespeare plays and boosted the company's fundraising capability.

- providing food themed dress-up tents for *Very Local Food Hubs and Cooking Good's* free, educational community events in Moulsecoomb and Bevendean, celebrating sustainable, affordable food.

- fully subsidising *Lewes Foodbank*, who saw volunteers fundraising by dressing up to create awareness of their cause and raise vital funds.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

Our 15-years' experience of delivering outreach programmes reaches low-income communities who have few opportunities for outings and social interaction. With a focus on East Brighton, we reach children, families and older people who live in areas that fall within the 10% most deprived parts of the UK, as defined by the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Family Sessions

Our programme enables us to reach people most in need by bringing the transformational nature of our dress-up activities into the heart of communities experiencing disadvantage and hardship. We invite families to be socially active together via interactive dress-up play. The results are:

- children stretch their imaginations and are active in their play.
- children feel safe in expressing themselves creatively or discovering unique identities through the lens of the 'new me' that character dress-up can offer.
- families experience the freedom and fun that dress-up play offers and have an opportunity to step out of sometimes very challenging life situations.

In response to the ever-increasing cost-of-living crisis, we were able to grow the scope of our family outreach sessions. Building on the previous success of our partnership work with 3 local food poverty initiatives: *CHOMP Moulsecoomb*, *Bevendean CHOMP*, and the *Bevy Pub's kids club* we expanded our reach by collaborating with an additional 5 community food partners. We identified a joint vision to bring people together to share nutritious food and explore creative, interactive activity. By addressing wellbeing and food provision together we could give families the experience of a 'day out', with respite from sometimes

very tough daily lives and opportunities for joyful, sociable family fun. This expansion of family outreach enabled us to provide dress-up activities to:

- established free holiday meal clubs run by *Bevendean CHOMP* and *CHOMP Central*, in Whitehawk, Hangleton and Central Brighton for people receiving free school meals or on low incomes.
- new free initiatives such as community cook-a-long sessions in Moulsecoomb and Bevendean with *Cooking Good*, intergenerational family fun days in Whitehawk with *Robert Lodge 50+ group* and *Fire and Feast* events in Bevendean with *Fernee Forest Club*.

Furthermore we piloted a series of collaborative Christmas family sessions with these existing partners in Moulsecoomb and Bevendean, jointly increasing our reach to the most vulnerable families in the area by 35%. Families were able to enjoy a roast dinner and a range of festive activities, with Gladrags supplying Christmas dress-up, building a Santa's Grotto and arranging a special visit from Father Christmas himself.

The momentum we built from this and the incoming requests for our provision led to the roll out of our commitment for 2024 to deliver 30 free community dress-up sessions as a meaningful way to celebrate our organisation's 30th anniversary.

Reaching older people

We ran a final event with *Chatterboxes*, the social group for elderly residents of Moulsecoomb and Bevendean. We all celebrated in style with a coronation reminiscence session and festive lunch, with regal dress up and many a tale of previous coronations shared, sparked by historical memorabilia. Having partnered with *The Bevy* pub to set up this post-pandemic initiative, the group's activities became absorbed into an existing seniors club, changing their needs regarding the suitability of our provision. We stayed connected with the group and invited them to community events that proactively engaged different generations.

We began a re-evaluation of the need and potential reach of our provision, consulting with local advisors *Trust in Developing Communities* as well as a local reminiscence consultant. We identified two potential new elders' groups to engage with in Moulsecoomb and Whitehawk and began planning taster sessions for Spring 2024.

SCOPE OF BENEFICIARIES

We maintained our aim to prioritise reaching both children and adults most in need by:

- continuing to tailor our resources to suit the individual needs of educational and community projects addressing disadvantage.
- maintaining the same level of costume provision subsidy to our beneficiaries (unchanged for groups most in need since 2010).

- delivering our community outreach programme in partnership with food security organisations in the most deprived areas of our city.

We increased our reach to new beneficiary-groups by:

- pro-actively engaging with local schools, community groups and the local arts sector.

- promoting our resource provision beyond Brighton through a consistent online presence on social media platforms that celebrated our mission and gave a platform to our beneficiary groups.

New beneficiaries included:

- *Ditchling Primary* and *Carden Primary schools,* who benefitted from resource boxes and costumes for Stunning Starts, whereby teachers introduce new topics innovatively at the start of the school term

- *Haywards Heath College* and *Cavendish School* who were able to costume casts of over 50 students and add authenticity to their staging of era-specific musicals *Made in Dagenham* and *Little Women*.

- Amateur arts groups such as *Eastbourne Gilbert and Sullivan*, *Arundel Players* and *Wings Youth Theatre* who were able to affordably supplement their own wardrobe collections and avoid hiring full show sets unnecessarily.
- Emerging professional theatre companies *Cue Fanfare* and *Rabbit in the Headlights* who accessed high quality costumes at discounted rates, producing professional quality productions despite very low budgets.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

Brighton Textile Reuse Hub

Gladrags' invitation to like-minded sustainable organisations to further common goals boosted our combined ability to implement a waste-free approach to textile resources. This resulted in the launch of the *Textile Reuse Hub* in November 2023, a dynamic and growing collaboration between Gladrags, *Leftover Threads*, garment upcycling specialists and *Smarter Uniforms* who collect and redistribute school uniform.

By pooling our resources, community networks and experience, we promote and facilitate textile reuse with shared aims to:

- increase the reuse and circulation of existing textiles in the local area.
- support individuals impacted by the rising cost of living, by encouraging the use of second-hand or repurposed clothing and providing assistance with repairs.
- raise awareness of the environmental impact of textile waste and the importance of sustainable practices.

With support from *East Brighton Trust,* we established an operational base from which the Gladrags Rehome-it! Scheme was able to flourish. This initiative redistributes our surplus costumes and textiles for free within the Sussex community, especially to schools, colleges and grassroots community groups. It prompts us to assess the relevance and usage of our existing costume collections, and to pass on items donated to Gladrags that are more suited to other projects.

The Rehome-it! Scheme acts as an important extension to our hire-not-buy service and aligns with local and UK-wide ambitions for a circular economy, all contributing to the *Brighton and Hove City Council*'s objective of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030.

Rehome-it!:

Our Rehome-it! scheme began in March 2023 and gained significant traction into 2024 with consistent promotion, fostering relationships with key audiences and operating the scheme from the Textile Reuse Hub premises. We engaged with 40 groups across the year and repurposed 1,250 items in the following ways:

- Store visits for individual groups that provided:
  - → warm street wear for the clothing hub run by *First Base Day Centre* for homeless people
  - → fabric remnants, a sewing machine and haberdashery kit to resource the new community sewing group at *Bristol Estate Tenant's Association Hub*.
  - → children's dressing up costumes to support *Moulsecoomb Primary School*'s Opal scheme, boosting imaginative free play activities in breaktimes.
- Running four Rehome-it! Open Days with attendees including: Textile and Arts faculty students from *Varndean School*, *Brighton MET college* and *Northbrook University*; textile teachers from *BHASVIC* and *Blatchington Mill Schools*, and community groups *Art Space* and *Far Far Away Musical Group*.
- Hosting a Rehome-it! Facebook group to facilitate direct item exchanges between members and promote external bulk rehoming opportunities. The platform also facilitates the connection between groups, allowing them to share and exchange ideas for reusing and repurposing items.
- Delivering a three-day eco residency at *Brighton MET college* where we rehomed 334 items alone and engaged students in our mission to mitigate textile waste with a sustainability presentation.
- Rehoming to families in need via outreach activities, including gifting over 70 Halloween costume items for trick or treating fun, and nearly 100 dress-up items as part of a Christmas pop-up 'rehome' collective we steered with *Smarter Uniforms*, *CHOMP Brighton* and *Very Local Food Hubs*. Families were able to move into the festive season with gifted stocking presents, holiday dressing-up costumes, school uniform essentials and fruit & veg boxes.

Sustainability Placements:

Since introducing our Revive to Rewear programme in March 2023, we supported 12 volunteers through our textile sustainability placements across the year, supporting pathways to further education and employment for young people and those stepping back into the workplace. These placements offer volunteers with diverse learning needs the opportunity to develop their knowledge of sustainable

textile practices in action, whilst equally supporting our in-house costume provision and community outreach work. Key benefits for the volunteers who took part were:

- acquiring practical skills such as customer service, repair and upcycling techniques, costume styling and garment repurposing, framed within both sustainability and industry knowledge.

- achieving learning objectives, evidenced by certification, relevant to the modern world of work where implementing sustainability practices are increasingly important.

- becoming confident ambassadors of our approach to reducing apparel waste through our hire-not-buy costume service and broader sector initiatives to combat fast fashion.

Vintage Sales

The selling of our vintage stock is a means of repurposing sellable items and dress fabrics less relevant to the beneficiary groups accessing our Re-home-it! scheme. Via our online and in-person sales we are able to:

- align our circular fashion ethos by using the re-sale of clothing to fund our mission, serving beneficiary groups in Sussex.
- promote the purchase of second-hand clothing and be actively part of the solution to textile waste.

A shift in public awareness and attitudes to the perils of fast fashion has enabled us to reach new audiences seeking to reduce their personal impact on textile waste and opt out of 'purchasing new'.

We experienced lower-level online sales than in previous years through Vinted and E-bay, reflected in market trends, with a return to high street shopping post-pandemic. This led us to:

- channel further stock into mini outlets, via established Vintage clothing shops: *Up North, Department* and *Showgirl Vintage* as well as selling direct to vintage traders.

- expand our pop-up sales, a particular highlight being our participation in the first ever city-wide event for *Sustainable Fashion Week*. At the two-day marketplace we were able to showcase our entire vintage apparel for sale as well as a collection of 'repair and refashion' clothing. In addition to raising over £1000 revenue, this gave us a meaningful platform to engage with our city's circular fashion conscious community and promote our environmental mission.

VOLUNTEERS:

Opportunities:

Over the course of the year, 69 volunteers helped us to maintain our resources, deliver activities and serve our beneficiaries and we welcomed 37 new volunteers to the team.

We provided volunteer opportunities for people with a range of learning, social and career needs, including:

- 12 certificated textile sustainability placements to support pathways into further education or employment
- 3 student module placements and 9 work experience placements for school pupils
- 5 supported workplace opportunities for people with learning disabilities, and volunteer roles for 7 people with mental health needs
- 7 further roles for school and university students

Progression:

For some, volunteering at Gladrags is a stepping-stone on professional or personal journeys, bolstering portfolios and fostering self-confidence. We maintained our commitment to supporting this with tailored volunteering roles and signposting volunteers to relevant arts internships and progression opportunities. Since working with us in 2023-24:

- 2 volunteers gained the experience they needed to apply for prestigious internship schemes.
- 5 volunteers boosted their portfolios and styling experience to support their career paths in theatre design, costume in film and costume construction.
- 3 recent graduates gained invaluable work experience and the confidence to reach paid positions in wardrobe, box office management, and events.

Engagement:

For others still their contribution to Gladrags is an integral part of their life, and by March 2024, 6 volunteers in our team had been with us for over 12 years; another 8 for over 5 years. We are proud of the strength and experience this maintains in our team and the safe and welcoming environment this offers for new volunteers to come into. We bolstered volunteer engagement by:

- ensuring that volunteers' roles evolved according to what was relevant and rewarding for them individually and ensuring that their effort and dedication was valued by the organisation.
- delivering free upskilling initiatives in sewing and repair, from refresher machine sewing workshops, to more advanced technique sessions.
- providing additional training and skills development with a particular focus this year on millinery repair and restoration, conducted by an industry professional, and 1:1 beginner sewing sessions with volunteers under 21 and volunteers with additional needs.

- offering subsidised access to arts and culture events, acknowledging the link between volunteers' work for Gladrags and the projects and organisations we resource.

Wellbeing

For most, volunteering with Gladrags also fulfils a personal need, such as:

- social interaction and building confidence
- acquiring new skills or sharing existing ones
- gaining general workplace experience or costume knowledge
- being immersed and purposeful in a creative environment

We place high importance on a sense of belonging and community within our volunteer team and recognise how important this is to ensure that individual volunteers feel valued and equally that the charity can deliver on its aims and

objectives. We provide opportunities both within volunteering roles and via social gatherings for volunteers to connect meaningfully with each other and with the organisation. We organise a range of social events throughout the year and during National Volunteer's Week that acknowledge the immense difference our volunteers make to Gladrags' ability to deliver on its aims and objectives.

INCOME GENERATION

Having the ability to raise our own regular source of revenue is key to our organisational sustainability, building unrestricted reserves that ensure we are able to maintain our costume provision and support our team in the immediate term as well as plan costume outreach and services in the longer-term.

Our principal revenue model links costume hire fees directly to our resource provision: beneficiaries, who make up 78% of our hire revenue, contribute at a very minimal level in order to loan costumes and resource boxes affordably; this service is then subsidised by the top-rate hire fees paid by professionals and partygoers. Collectively this raised £53,200, over half our annual income of £101,300. Our evolving relationships with professional costume designers and stylists boosted hire revenue and a growing awareness of our stock quality for film and TV brought us business and revenue from the BBC, ITV and Channel 5.

Income from grants and significant donors are equally crucial to our capacity to deliver services and activities to our beneficiaries. Repeat funding from *Arnold Burton Trust, MF Mills, The Brian Mitchell Charitable Settlement* and *East Brighton Trust* was boosted by a new grant from *Brighton and Hove city Council,* collectively bringing £32,700 to the organisation.

Our Winter Warmer Appeal raised over £3000, largely from the general public, to specifically support our dress-up provision for community food initiatives and grassroots arts projects, whilst £5,900 revenue from Vintage Sales and events further boosted our unrestricted income.

Section E Financial review

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves	The charity holds reserves to ensure that: essential core and operational costs can be covered; longer term plans can be committed to; unforeseen circumstances can be mitigated. Reserves are reviewed quarterly; £18,000 is the rolling minimum reserve limit per quarter to enable optimum operational continuity; £8000 the bare minimum unrestricted reserves at any one time to ensure viability.

Section G Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s) H Butler

Full name(s) HEATHER BUTLER

Position	CHAIRPERSON	
Date	31.1.25	

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name: Gladrags Community Costume Trust | Charity No. / Company No.

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from 04/01/2023 To 31/3/2024

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Designated funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Hire Fees	53,219	-	-	53,219	45,976
Membership	4,290	-	-	4,290	4,250
Grants		23,250	-	23,250	22,000
Donations	1,001		11,701	12,702	11,406
Gift Aid Claims	333	-	1,067	1,400	1,145
Employment Allowance	-	-	-	-	-
Event Fees	1,980	-	-	1,980	2,065
Sales	3,892	-	-	3,892	5,711
Other	568	-	-	568	910
Sub total *(Gross income for AR)*	65,284	23,250	12,768	101,302	93,463
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	65,284	23,250	12,768	101,302	93,463
A3 Payments					
Premises (rent,business rates)		4,903	-	4,903	4,000
Insurance		1,343	-	1,343	747
Office,Utilities & Maintenance	1,659	6,385	589	8,633	6,982
Equipment	771	580	-	1,351	394
Staff & Volunteers	34,275	1,693	800	36,767	33,707
Workshops	26	11	111	148	-
Sessional Fees	32,127	9,127	7,533	48,787	38,658
PR & Communications	-	-	-	-	168
Professional Fees	-	-	600	600	810
Stock & Stock Care	1,026	48	-	1,075	1,471
Sales & Fundraising	139			139	277
Misc	83		-	83	316
Training	-	989	-	989	-
Sub total	70,106	25,079	9,633	104,818	87,529
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	70,106	25,079	9,633	104,818	87,529
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 4,823	- 1,829	3,135	- 3,516	5,934
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	38,294	21,767	9,561	69,622	63,687
Cash funds this year end	33,471	19,938	12,696	66,106	69,622

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Designated funds to nearest £
	Bank less amounts due	33,471	19,938	12,696

B1 Cash funds

	-	-	-
	-	-	-
Total cash funds	33,471	19,938	12,696

(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))

B2 Other monetary assets

Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
	-	-	-

B3 Investment assets

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-

B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-

B5 Liabilities

Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
Independent Examination	Unrestricted	600	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
J Reid	Heather Butler	31.1.25

GLADRAGS COMMUNITY COSTUME TRUST
(CHARITY NUMBER 1122704)

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF GLADRAGS COMMUNITY COSTUME TRUST FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 March 2024.

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011("the Act").

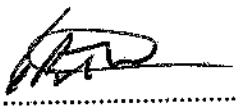
I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in any material respect:

(i). accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or

(ii). the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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



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C R Tyler FCA; DChA; FCIE
Chartered Accountant
Flat 24 Wellingtonia Court,
Laine Close,
Brighton
East Sussex
BN1 6TD

Date..30th January 2025.....

GLADRAGS COMMUNITY COSTUME TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1122704

Accounts

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

	Period start date			Period end date		
	Day	Month	Year	Day	Month	Year
From	1st	April	2022	To 31st	March	2023

Section A Reference and administration details

Charity name	Gladrags Community Costume Trust
Other names charity is known by	Gladrags Community Costume Resource
Registered charity number (if any)	1122704
Charity's principal address	Unit 10, Westergate Business Centre
	Westergate Road
	Brighton
Postcode	BN2 4QN

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Heather Butler	Chair		Trustees
	John Adams	Treasurer	26.10.22-31.3.23	Trustees
3	Neil Border	Secretary		Trustees
4				

me of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

nia Mills

Section B Structure, governance and management

scription of the charity's trusts

ype of governing document	Trust Deed
ow the charity is constituted	Charitable Trust
Trustee selection methods	Appointed by Trustees

Section C Objectives and activities

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

Educating the public in historical and world dress by providing low-cost costumes and related resources as an educational tool.

To advance education of the public by providing various costumes and related resources at low cost as an educational tool.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)

OVERVIEW:

Gladrags is a unique, eco-minded provider of costume resources and expertise which serve to further the activities of our beneficiary groups. Planet-friendly principles are key to our ethos: it is by virtue of both fostering and promoting the concept of re-using costumes since 1994 that we have built a resource of 10,000 items, 95% of which are donated stock that we repurpose and adapt to benefit the community time and time again.

We support and enrich the projects of our beneficiary groups by offering the following:

Affordable hire of pre-loved costumes and artefacts to organisations who would otherwise struggle to afford or have access to them. Our beneficiary groups include schools and colleges; libraries and day centres; community and youth groups; charities and not-for-profit organisations; amateur and fringe arts; professional theatre and arts with a socially conscious remit; further and higher education. Principal resources are:

- historical, world dress and show costumes and accessories for children and adults, suited particularly to educational practice, performance, wellbeing projects and community arts.
- resource boxes: costumes and artefacts tailored to a specific project or theme, most commonly to support primary school topics, promoting 'historical-detective' work and role-play activities.
- reminiscence boxes: containing authentic vintage clothing and everyday objects selected to fit an era or theme.

Reminiscence and heritage resources that support memory-sharing activities, within a context of health and wellbeing. Primarily we provide Reminiscence Boxes, vintage clothing and artefacts for:

- heritage exhibitions and activities.
- reminiscence sessions and interactive activities for older people experiencing isolation, including those living with dementia and Alzheimer's.

Store visits that provide additional educational or wellbeing support including:

- nurture visits for children, young people and adults who experience additional disadvantage, exploring the role of costume as part of a project's process and gaining experiential access to culture and the arts
- mentoring of school pupils and university students with drama or costume based assignments

Costume-making resources:

- Sewing equipment and recycled fabrics to resource user groups' own costume-making projects and encourage sustainable practice.
- Library collection: referencing historical dress of ordinary people; world and cultural dress; affordable, local costume resources.

Costume storage:

- Provision of a free shared storage facility for groups' own costumes, hence ensuring their costumes remain in use and that all groups benefit from the subsequently broadened range of costumes available to them from our store.

COMMUNITY:

Through our Community Outreach Programme we reach further groups and individuals who experience disadvantage and isolation. In response to the increasing cost-of-living crisis, we particularly focus on partnering with food security projects to deliver the following:

Creative dress-up and storytelling activities designed to encourage a sense of play for children and families experiencing life challenges. Costume becomes the catalyst for the creation of characters, scenarios and social interaction, whereby children stretch their imaginations and live out their dreams and hopes.

Reminiscence sessions with older people who come together to be socially active, often as a means of combating social isolation. Our sessions contribute to their wellbeing with:

- themed memory boxes that ignite the meaningful sharing of past experiences
- vintage and fancy-dress photo-booths that encourage playful activity and a reminder of the sense of fun that can be had at any stage of life

Textile crafts for children and young people, within a context of promoting emotional wellbeing and developing self-confidence.

VOLUNTEERS:

The volunteer team support the running of all our operations, which we could not deliver effectively without them. They are therefore instrumental in determining our

capacity to reach more beneficiaries and to deliver on the organisation's aims and objectives. We support a diverse community of volunteers, and we continue to provide opportunities for people with a range of learning and support needs, tailoring roles to their interests and aspirations. We provide training opportunities and supported work placements within the organisation that maintain self-confidence or support specific pathways into the creative arts industry and general employment.

Trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)

SUSTAINAIBILITY:

- Environmental sustainability frames our aims and objectives, with the re-use of resources at the core of our ethos and the services we offer, as well as being integral to the communication of key organisational values. Our long-standing commitment to be part of the solution to a sustainable textile industry and our planet-friendly practices influence organisations and individuals and ensure that our own carbon footprint remains minimal.

  Our hire-not-buy service encourages a consumer ethos of accessing high quality pre-loved garments versus cheaply bought and unethically made ones. The 10,000 costumes we share with our local communities are predominantly comprised of donated and recycled stock, some of which are further adapted by us for improved costume purpose. We encourage beneficiary groups to gift their un-used costumes to Gladrags to re-share these within our communities. The free costume-making support and recycled materials we offer groups further promotes sustainable costume practice.

  Our re-homing scheme, whereby we donate surplus costumes and artefacts, brings together our principles of minimal waste with opportunities to provide additional support to the charities, schools and community projects who benefit from the scheme.

- An ethos of wider participation and social inclusion is a key aspect to the delivery of and access to our services and we recognise that our organisational purpose is sustained by this focus. Consequently, we are committed to reaching community groups and individuals experiencing disadvantage and isolation and achieve this further through our own outreach projects.

- We actively recruit, support, and develop volunteers with wide-ranging skills and learning needs and celebrate the inclusivity of our team as an organisational asset. The wellbeing of our volunteers and staff is paramount to Gladrags' sustainability, and the longevity of service from many, a testament to this.

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

PROVISION OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

Gladrags reached 8,500 people in 2022-23, by supplying costumes and related resources to projects they participated in or attended. An increase of 1,400 beneficiaries in the previous year, we contributed to the following:

- Education: complementing interactive approaches to learning, in particular adding context to social history or world cultures; creating access opportunities to arts and culture in an educational context.
- Sustainability: promoting a planet-friendly approach to costume, clothing and fashion; responsibly re-homing costumes and recycled items suitable for craft and textile projects; resourcing climate-focussed initiatives.
- Health and well-being: stimulating and nurturing memory, imagination, creativity and play within our outreach sessions. Providing activities that specifically promote positive mental health and wellbeing, and that develop self-confidence and awareness of personal abilities.
- Community cohesion: bringing people together through live and performing arts and in shared creative activities, to become socially active again.
- Celebration: adding colour and magic to performance-based projects, theatre and film, social and cultural events.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

Our 13-years' experience of delivering outreach programmes reaches low-income communities who have few opportunities for outings and social interaction. With a focus on East Brighton, we reach children, families and older people who are living on the edges of poverty. In addition to these communities being the most local to Gladrags, they reside in areas that fall within the 10% most deprived parts of the UK as defined by the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Family Sessions

Through the transformational lens of dress-up, our interactive costume sessions invite children to be imaginative and active in their play, enabling them to step out of challenging life situations for the day and encouraging families to reconnect in a fun and playful way.

In response to the cost-of-living crisis, we grew the scope of our family outreach provision by teaming up with free community food initiatives: CHOMP Moulsecoomb and Bevendean CHOMP lunch clubs; The Bevy Pub's Kids' Club; Bevendean Community Garden's Fire and Feast events. Our partners provided nutritious meals and refreshment; Gladrags lifted spirits with our joyful blend of dressing-up corners and textile crafts. Together we worked to fill the hunger and wellbeing gap, especially in school holidays, when many families particularly struggle to feed a whole family daily.

By November 2022 we had formed a collaborative Winter Warmer programme with CHOMP Moulsecoomb and Bevendean CHOMP. Our free, inclusive family sessions combined nourishing food with nurturing play experiences, in warm, friendly venues. With 60% of children attending having additional needs, we identified that the kinaesthetic nature of costume play and textile crafts was particularly nurturing and inclusive. Our craft projects were designed to be easily repeatable at home, using objects found in nature and repurposing items that would otherwise go to household recycling or waste.

Reaching older people and Reminiscence

Chatterboxes for elderly residents of Moulsecoomb and Bevendean evolved in lockdown as people emerged from shielding. Partnering with *The Bevy Community Pub* in Moulsecoomb, we supported their lunch club for older people experiencing isolation, including those living with dementia and Alzheimer's. With a focus on fostering positive mental health and wellbeing, our reminiscence boxes are designed to unlock treasured memories of days gone by and spark the meaningful sharing of past events. These lunch clubs offered social interaction and enrichment activities alongside a much-needed hearty lunch.

ARTS AND HERITAGE:

Our Place

Our Place, Brighton Festival's flagship community initiative ran for its second year in Moulsecoomb and Bevendean. Gladrags led in artistic liaison and support to the initiative's artist in residence, and as part of a local steering committee oversaw a series of free festival workshops and a final community event for neighbourhood residents who have less opportunities to access arts and culture. We again engaged our volunteer team in creative output that is both fulfilling for them and beneficial to the residency. As well as sharing their skills during residency workshops, this year our team repurposed upholstery and book-binding waste materials to produce a series of fabric birds, accompanying flocks of paper birds that formed part of a community murmuration event.

Jubilee

We supported several celebrations, most notably providing:

- a travelling Royal Tent, a free dress-up experience that invited interactive play inspired by queens, kings and courts of history and of the imagination. From The *Bevendean Jubilee Picnic* and *The Bevy Pub's Jubilee BBQ* to *CHOMP Moulsecoomb's Jubilee Family Session*, children and adults from low-income backgrounds were able to join in the festivities at these free, inclusive community days.
- a Jubilee lunch for elders, to which we brought memorabilia and artefacts from Jubilees in times gone by, along with a replica of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation dress and crown. The exchange of stories that spanned the decades lifted spirits and offered a cheery reminder of the joy of celebration and the marking of significant national events.
- free loan of community bunting – adding Jubilee themed garlands to the collection we built during our community lockdown bunting project.

Dorset Opera

Commissioned by production designer Stewart Charlesworth we took on the styling of large-scale opera chorus costumes for a professional production of *The Magic Flute*. Building on the styling service we began offering independent schools last year, the Magic Flute project pooled the expertise of designers and makers in our volunteer team, both to curate the costume collection and mentor other volunteers keen to gain new skills. Inspired by our sustainable approach, this saw the beginning of a creative partnership with the designer that includes the repurposing of damaged or underused costumes and production design methods that resist single-use materials and new purchase of garments.

Aspiring Professionals

Gladrags' decades-long experience of supporting fringe and aspiring professional arts practitioners has driven the flexible approach we offer to their theatre, film and performance companies. With further funding cuts across the arts, these troupes consistently acknowledge that our subsidised costume provision to them is key to their ability to produce professional quality productions on extremely low budgets. In this way we promote equal arts access, both for those entertaining communities, and for the audiences who can subsequently attend affordable productions and screenings, including the following across this year:

- Celebration of classic plays by *Greek to Me* and *Brighton Shakespeare Company*.
- New adaptations of novels from *Half-time Orange Theatre* and *Frankly Speaking Dance Productions*.
- New writing from *Different Theatre* and *Manly Hubris Films*.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

Community

In addition to celebratory drama and performance, our preloved costume collection provides enrichment to a broad spectrum of other projects including:

- Christmas joy sensitively brought to people for whom seasonal festivities are particularly difficult, with staff at *Martlets Hospice Care* and volunteers at *Kennedy Street Recovery Cafe* dressing the part.
- provision of safe, fun, creative space to explore gender identity and gender expression with *Brighton Youth Centre*'s drag workshops and *Kidzone*'s drag storytelling for children.
- educational, issue-based arts, such as *Friends Families and Travellers'* touring show *"Crystal's Vardo"*, raising awareness of Gypsy Roma Traveller history and culture; *Carousel*'s mini films, championing the rights of artists with a learning disability to flourish.

Food Security

With the cost-of-living an increasing concern nationally and locally, we provided support and subsidised costume packages for projects bridging the food poverty gap by:

- expanding our collaboration further with the theatre company *One Fell Swoop* and supporting their efforts to raise funds for *Fareshare Sussex*, the surplus food redistribution charity. By providing 200 costumes for free and assisting with costume design for their *Shakespeare Unlocked* festival we resourced a series of outdoor Shakespeare plays and boosted the company's fundraising capability.

- resourcing *Very Local Food Hubs*, a free community event in Bevendean, with food themed costumes to support the event's aim to celebrate and educate around sustainable, affordable food systems.
- fully subsidising *Lewes Foodbank*, who saw volunteers fundraising by dressing up to create awareness of their cause and raise vital funds.

Education

We are always listening to the evolving needs of schools and this year saw us:

- research new resource boxes: *Windrush Generation* and *A Century of Protest*, that would shine a light on key moments of history identified by teachers as deserving of more prominence.

- work with the SENCo at *Moulsecoomb Primary School* to curate a series of bespoke dress-up cases linked to curriculum literacy topics. These topics were brought to life through role-play and interactive activities for children across the school with special educational needs.

- sharing our skills and resources by mentoring college students with costume or production responsibilities linked to their courses at *Greater Brighton Metropolitan College* and *IC Theatre*.

Scope of beneficiaries:

We maintained our aim to prioritise reaching both children and adults most in need by:

- continuing to tailor our resources to suit the individual needs of educational and community projects addressing disadvantage.
- maintaining the same level of costume provision subsidy to our beneficiaries (unchanged for groups most in need since 2010).
- delivering our community outreach programme in partnership with food security organisations in the most deprived areas of our city.

We increased our reach to new beneficiary-groups by:

- Boosting our online presence on social media platforms and pro-actively engaging with local schools, community groups and the local arts sector.

  Brighton and Hove primary schools *Mile Oak* and *Aldrington* benefitted from resource boxes to enrich classroom activities; further afield, special schools *Manor Green* in Crawley and *Springboard Education* in Lancing hired costumes and props to support sensory drama workshops and performance. *Burgess Hill Theatre Club* and *Sackville Players* were able to add authenticity to their staging of era-specific plays and *Kidzone* ran a series of free children's creative workshops inspired by their discovery of our costume resource.

- launching a newsletter in 2022, increasing engagement and awareness of our charitable remit and sustainable costume provision. This brought us to the attention of socially conscious businesses who commissioned our dress-up corners and photobooths to further their community missions:

  - *Moulsecoomb Place* ran two free community fun days linked to their consultation process with the community living locally to their new development site.

  - *Fever Club* chose Gladrags as their 2022 charity to support via their Christmas club night; our photobooth for the night was additionally linked to our Winter Warmer fundraising appeal, enabling us to raise funds from partygoers.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

Sustainable networking

We deepened our connections with like-minded organisations to further common goals around promoting a waste-free approach to textile resources which included:

- closed loop rehoming between Gladrags and the Adur-based *Scrap Space*, a scheme which enables community access to low cost reclaimed materials for art, craft and play.

- planning an awareness campaign around textile sustainability, with initial discussions had with *Sew Fabulous* (community sewing), *Smarter Uniforms* (repurpose and resale of school uniform) and *Super Looper* (pre-loved baby clothes hire).

- teaming up with local reuse and repair charities and businesses to consult on The *Brighton and Hove City Council's* Textile Champions Scheme which supports residents to become active anti-textile waste ambassadors.

We launched our *Revive to Rewear* programme which comprised:

- a new textile sustainability placement for volunteers as well as specialised repair training and upskilling opportunities

- a new Rehome-it! network, and planned community days to increase the repurposing of surplus items to community groups

Textile sustainability placement:

This placement acknowledges the need to provide volunteering opportunities that:

- can act as pathways to employment for young people and those stepping back into the workplace.
- are relevant to the modern world of work where implementing sustainability practices are increasingly important.

Since sustainability is stitched into everything we do at Gladrags, we recognised that we are equipped to provide a modular placement whereby volunteers can develop their knowledge of sustainable textile practices in action, whilst equally supporting our in-house costume provision and community outreach work. By providing certification to them we can further support their future routes into employment. Our first three placements began in March 2022.

Rehome-it!

Our rehoming scheme redistributes surplus costumes and textiles for free within the Sussex community, especially to schools and grassroots community groups. This scheme prompts us to assess the relevance and usage of our existing costume collections, and to pass on items donated to Gladrags that are more suited to other projects including the following:

- Warm street wear for the clothing hub run by *First Base Day Centre* for homeless people
- Partywear and festival costume for party clothes swaps run by *Sew-Fabulous Community Sewing Studio*
- Dress-up costumes given to local families during our collaborative family sessions, as part of our Winter Warmer Programme

We were able to save damaged or scrap items from going to landfill, for example providing:

- distressed clothing for further adaptation by theatre designer Stewart Charlesworth for his Opera chorus costume design, depicting 'dustbowl 1930s depression' in a production of *The Magic Flute* at Dorset Opera.
- saved fabric scraps from our own upcycling and repair projects to gift to the *Scrap-Space* scheme.

The launch of our online Rehome-it! Network took this ethos a step further, inviting a circular economy ethos amongst arts, education and theatre initiatives to pass on unused costumes, textiles and props amongst themselves such as:

- *Southwick Players* donating 100 costumes and fabric lengths on the roll to *Littlehampton Academy*
- *Sew Fabulous Community Studio* donating 20 coffee sacks to *Chomp Moulsecoomb*

By actively encouraging organisations to join and utilise the network we quickly reached a 400 strong membership of people signing up to a waste-free approach to costume and textile resources and becoming influencers within their own networks.

Vintage Sales

The selling of our vintage stock is a means of repurposing sellable items and dress fabrics less relevant to the beneficiary groups accessing our Re-home-it! scheme. Via our online and in-person sales we are able to:

- align our circular fashion ethos by using the re-sale of clothing to fund our mission, serving beneficiary groups in Sussex.
- promote the purchase of second-hand clothing and be actively part of the solution to textile waste.

A shift in public awareness and attitudes to the impact of fast fashion has enabled us to:

- reach new audiences seeking to reduce their personal impact on textile waste and opt out of 'purchasing new'.
- reach audiences searching for affordable retro styles and quality fabrics.
- branch out successfully into mini outlets, selling stock via established Vintage clothing shops: *Up North, Department* and *Showgirl Vintage* as well as the new business, *Fabric Tree*.

VOLUNTEERS:

Opportunities:

Over the course of the year, 66 volunteers helped us to maintain our resources, deliver activities and serve our beneficiaries and we welcomed 33 new volunteers to the team.

We provided volunteer opportunities for people with a range of learning, social and career needs, including:

- 6 workplace and student module placements and 8 work experience placements for school pupils
- 4 supported volunteer opportunities for people with learning disabilities and 4 opportunities for people with mental health needs
- 11 further roles for FE and university students

Progression:

For some, volunteering at Gladrags is a stepping-stone on professional or personal journeys, bolstering portfolios and fostering self-confidence. We

maintained our commitment to supporting this with tailored opportunities and since working with us in 2022-23:

- 2 volunteers gained the experience they needed to apply for college and university courses.
- 3 volunteers boosted their portfolios and styling experience to support their career paths in theatre design and costume wardrobe.
- 3 recent graduates gained the work experience they needed to apply for paid positions in education, administration, and retail.
- 3 volunteers embarked on our Textile Sustainability Placement.

Engagement:

For others still their contribution to Gladrags is an integral part of their life, and by March 2023, 5 volunteers in our team had been with us for over 10 years; another 7 for over 5 years. We are proud of the strength and experience this maintains in our team and the safe and welcoming environment this offers for new volunteers to come into. We bolstered volunteer engagement by:

- ensuring that volunteers' roles evolved according to what was relevant and rewarding for them individually and ensuring that their effort and dedication was valued by the organisation.
- delivering free upskilling initiatives in sewing and repair, from refresher machine sewing workshops, to more advanced technique sessions.
- providing additional training and skills development that address the evolving requirements of running a customer-facing service, whilst being tailored to individual volunteers' needs and interests.
- offering subsidised access to arts and culture events, acknowledging the link between volunteers' work for Gladrags and the projects and organisations we resource.

Wellbeing

For most, volunteering with Gladrags also fulfils a personal need, such as: social interaction; gaining new skills or sharing existing ones; building confidence; gaining workplace experience; being immersed amongst costume and being helpful in a creative environment. We place high importance on a sense of belonging and community within our volunteer team and recognise how important this is to ensure that individual volunteers feel valued and equally that the charity can deliver on its aims and objectives. We provide opportunities both within volunteering roles and via social gatherings for volunteers to connect meaningfully with each other and with the organisation. We organise a range of social events throughout the year and during National Volunteer's Week, with 2022 culminating in a Christmas Feast and wreath-making workshop.

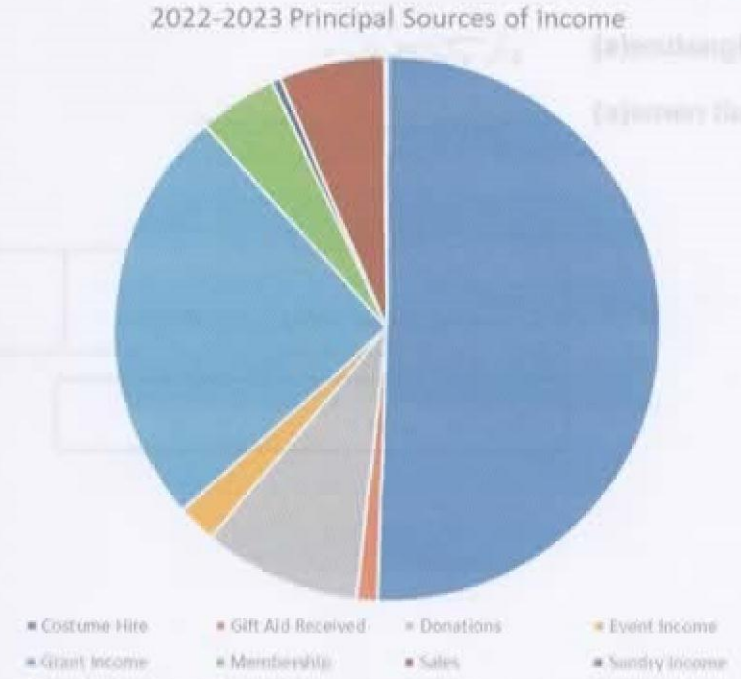
We responded to the impact of the increasing cost-of-living crisis on some amongst the team by providing additional food supplies and producing a wellbeing pack of resources to guide people through advice and support services.

INCOME GENERATION

Having the ability to raise our own regular source of revenue is key to our organisational sustainability, building unrestricted reserves that ensure we are able to maintain our costume provision and support our team in the immediate term as well as plan costume outreach and services in the longer-term. Our principal revenue model links costume hire fees directly to our resource provision: beneficiaries contribute at a very minimal level in order to loan costumes and resource boxes affordably; this service is then subsidised by the top-rate hire fees paid by professionals and partygoers.

Income from grants and significant donors are equally crucial to our capacity to deliver services and activities to our beneficiaries. Repeat funding from *Arnold Burton Trust, The Brian Mitchell Settlement* and *East Brighton Trust* was boosted by new grants from the *Now! Fund* and the *Amy Hart Foundation*.

Our Winter Warmer Appeal, as our first ever significant public fundraising endeavour raised £3000 towards our growing community outreach programme, whilst £5,700 revenue from Vintage Sales and events further boosted the resilience of our funding strategy.



Section E Financial review

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

The charity aims to hold at least £8000 in reserve to guarantee necessary immediate and short-term core expenditure in the subsequent quarter.

Reserves are held to ensure that: essential core and operational costs can be covered; longer term plans can be committed to; unforeseen circumstances can be mitigated. Reserves are reviewed quarterly; £18,000 is the rolling minimum reserve limit per quarter to enable optimum operational continuity; £8000 the bare minimum unrestricted reserves at any one time to ensure viability.

Section G Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s) [signature]

Full name(s) HEATHER BUTLER

Position CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

Date 30.1.24

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name: Gladrags Community Costume Trust

No (if any): 1132084

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from 1/4/2022 To 31/3/2023

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Designated funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Hire Fees	45,976	-	-	45,976	27,104
Membership	4,250	-	-	4,250	2,615
Grants		22,000	-	22,000	22,698
Donations	1,570		6,940	8,510	6,252
Gift Aid Claims	335	-	810	1,145	-
Employment Allowance	-	-	-	-	-
Event Fees	2,065	-	-	2,065	-
Sales	5,711	-	-	5,711	5,143
Other	910	-	-	910	205
***Sub total** (Gross income for AR)*	60,816	22,000	7,750	90,566	64,018
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	60,816	22,000	7,750	90,566	64,018
A3 Payments					
Premises (rent,business rates)	1,285	2,716	-	4,001	4,399
Insurance		747	-	747	632
Office,Utilities & Maintenance	767	5,677	538	6,982	3,831
Equipment	265	129	-	394	627
Staff & Volunteers	32,322	1,385	-	33,707	30,113
Workshops	-	-	-	-	-
Sessional Fees	26,404	8,190	4,063	38,658	32,376
PR & Communications	168	-	-	168	-
Professional Fees	-	-	810	810	750
Stock & Stock Care	1,397	74	-	1,471	1,653
Sales	277			277	337
Fundraising	-	-	-	-	-
Misc	317		-	317	294
Training	-	-	-	-	50
Sub total	63,203	18,917	5,411	87,531	75,062
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	63,203	18,917	5,411	87,531	75,062
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 2,387	3,083	2,339	3,036	- 11,044
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	41,394	17,918	4,375	63,687	74,731
Cash funds this year end	39,007	21,001	6,714	66,723	63,687

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Designated funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank less amounts due	39,007	21,001	6,714
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds (agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	39,007	21,001	6,714

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the			-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities	Current Liabilities	Unrestricted		
	HMRC	Unrestricted		
	Pension	Unrestricted		
	Independent Examination	Unrestricted	600	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	H Butler	HEATHER BUTLER	30.1.24

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

	Period start date			Period end date		
	Day	Month	Year	Day	Month	Year
From	1st	April	2022	To 31st	March	2023

Section A Reference and administration details

Charity name	Gladrags Community Costume Trust
Other names charity is known by	Gladrags Community Costume Resource
Registered charity number (if any)	1122704
Charity's principal address	Unit 10, Westergate Business Centre
	Westergate Road
	Brighton
Postcode	BN2 4QN

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Heather Butler	Chair		Trustees
	John Adams	Treasurer	26.10.22-31.3.23	Trustees
3	Neil Border	Secretary		Trustees
4				

me of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

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Section B Structure, governance and management

scription of the charity's trusts

ype of governing document	Trust Deed
ow the charity is constituted	Charitable Trust
Trustee selection methods	Appointed by Trustees

Section C Objectives and activities

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

Educating the public in historical and world dress by providing low-cost costumes and related resources as an educational tool.

To advance education of the public by providing various costumes and related resources at low cost as an educational tool.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)

OVERVIEW:

Gladrags is a unique, eco-minded provider of costume resources and expertise which serve to further the activities of our beneficiary groups. Planet-friendly principles are key to our ethos: it is by virtue of both fostering and promoting the concept of re-using costumes since 1994 that we have built a resource of 10,000 items, 95% of which are donated stock that we repurpose and adapt to benefit the community time and time again.

We support and enrich the projects of our beneficiary groups by offering the following:

Affordable hire of pre-loved costumes and artefacts to organisations who would otherwise struggle to afford or have access to them. Our beneficiary groups include schools and colleges; libraries and day centres; community and youth groups; charities and not-for-profit organisations; amateur and fringe arts; professional theatre and arts with a socially conscious remit; further and higher education. Principal resources are:

- historical, world dress and show costumes and accessories for children and adults, suited particularly to educational practice, performance, wellbeing projects and community arts.
- resource boxes: costumes and artefacts tailored to a specific project or theme, most commonly to support primary school topics, promoting 'historical-detective' work and role-play activities.
- reminiscence boxes: containing authentic vintage clothing and everyday objects selected to fit an era or theme.

Reminiscence and heritage resources that support memory-sharing activities, within a context of health and wellbeing. Primarily we provide Reminiscence Boxes, vintage clothing and artefacts for:

- heritage exhibitions and activities.
- reminiscence sessions and interactive activities for older people experiencing isolation, including those living with dementia and Alzheimer's.

Store visits that provide additional educational or wellbeing support including:

- nurture visits for children, young people and adults who experience additional disadvantage, exploring the role of costume as part of a project's process and gaining experiential access to culture and the arts
- mentoring of school pupils and university students with drama or costume based assignments

Costume-making resources:

- Sewing equipment and recycled fabrics to resource user groups' own costume-making projects and encourage sustainable practice.
- Library collection: referencing historical dress of ordinary people; world and cultural dress; affordable, local costume resources.

Costume storage:

- Provision of a free shared storage facility for groups' own costumes, hence ensuring their costumes remain in use and that all groups benefit from the subsequently broadened range of costumes available to them from our store.

COMMUNITY:

Through our Community Outreach Programme we reach further groups and individuals who experience disadvantage and isolation. In response to the increasing cost-of-living crisis, we particularly focus on partnering with food security projects to deliver the following:

Creative dress-up and storytelling activities designed to encourage a sense of play for children and families experiencing life challenges. Costume becomes the catalyst for the creation of characters, scenarios and social interaction, whereby children stretch their imaginations and live out their dreams and hopes.

Reminiscence sessions with older people who come together to be socially active, often as a means of combating social isolation. Our sessions contribute to their wellbeing with:

- themed memory boxes that ignite the meaningful sharing of past experiences
- vintage and fancy-dress photo-booths that encourage playful activity and a reminder of the sense of fun that can be had at any stage of life

Textile crafts for children and young people, within a context of promoting emotional wellbeing and developing self-confidence.

VOLUNTEERS:

The volunteer team support the running of all our operations, which we could not deliver effectively without them. They are therefore instrumental in determining our

capacity to reach more beneficiaries and to deliver on the organisation's aims and objectives. We support a diverse community of volunteers, and we continue to provide opportunities for people with a range of learning and support needs, tailoring roles to their interests and aspirations. We provide training opportunities and supported work placements within the organisation that maintain self-confidence or support specific pathways into the creative arts industry and general employment.

Trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)

SUSTAINAIBILITY:

- Environmental sustainability frames our aims and objectives, with the re-use of resources at the core of our ethos and the services we offer, as well as being integral to the communication of key organisational values. Our long-standing commitment to be part of the solution to a sustainable textile industry and our planet-friendly practices influence organisations and individuals and ensure that our own carbon footprint remains minimal.

  Our hire-not-buy service encourages a consumer ethos of accessing high quality pre-loved garments versus cheaply bought and unethically made ones. The 10,000 costumes we share with our local communities are predominantly comprised of donated and recycled stock, some of which are further adapted by us for improved costume purpose. We encourage beneficiary groups to gift their un-used costumes to Gladrags to re-share these within our communities. The free costume-making support and recycled materials we offer groups further promotes sustainable costume practice.

  Our re-homing scheme, whereby we donate surplus costumes and artefacts, brings together our principles of minimal waste with opportunities to provide additional support to the charities, schools and community projects who benefit from the scheme.

- An ethos of wider participation and social inclusion is a key aspect to the delivery of and access to our services and we recognise that our organisational purpose is sustained by this focus. Consequently, we are committed to reaching community groups and individuals experiencing disadvantage and isolation and achieve this further through our own outreach projects.

- We actively recruit, support, and develop volunteers with wide-ranging skills and learning needs and celebrate the inclusivity of our team as an organisational asset. The wellbeing of our volunteers and staff is paramount to Gladrags' sustainability, and the longevity of service from many, a testament to this.

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

PROVISION OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

Gladrags reached 8,500 people in 2022-23, by supplying costumes and related resources to projects they participated in or attended. An increase of 1,400 beneficiaries in the previous year, we contributed to the following:

- Education: complementing interactive approaches to learning, in particular adding context to social history or world cultures; creating access opportunities to arts and culture in an educational context.
- Sustainability: promoting a planet-friendly approach to costume, clothing and fashion; responsibly re-homing costumes and recycled items suitable for craft and textile projects; resourcing climate-focussed initiatives.
- Health and well-being: stimulating and nurturing memory, imagination, creativity and play within our outreach sessions. Providing activities that specifically promote positive mental health and wellbeing, and that develop self-confidence and awareness of personal abilities.
- Community cohesion: bringing people together through live and performing arts and in shared creative activities, to become socially active again.
- Celebration: adding colour and magic to performance-based projects, theatre and film, social and cultural events.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

Our 13-years' experience of delivering outreach programmes reaches low-income communities who have few opportunities for outings and social interaction. With a focus on East Brighton, we reach children, families and older people who are living on the edges of poverty. In addition to these communities being the most local to Gladrags, they reside in areas that fall within the 10% most deprived parts of the UK as defined by the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Family Sessions

Through the transformational lens of dress-up, our interactive costume sessions invite children to be imaginative and active in their play, enabling them to step out of challenging life situations for the day and encouraging families to reconnect in a fun and playful way.

In response to the cost-of-living crisis, we grew the scope of our family outreach provision by teaming up with free community food initiatives: CHOMP Moulsecoomb and Bevendean CHOMP lunch clubs; The Bevy Pub's Kids' Club; Bevendean Community Garden's Fire and Feast events. Our partners provided nutritious meals and refreshment; Gladrags lifted spirits with our joyful blend of dressing-up corners and textile crafts. Together we worked to fill the hunger and wellbeing gap, especially in school holidays, when many families particularly struggle to feed a whole family daily.

By November 2022 we had formed a collaborative Winter Warmer programme with CHOMP Moulsecoomb and Bevendean CHOMP. Our free, inclusive family sessions combined nourishing food with nurturing play experiences, in warm, friendly venues. With 60% of children attending having additional needs, we identified that the kinaesthetic nature of costume play and textile crafts was particularly nurturing and inclusive. Our craft projects were designed to be easily repeatable at home, using objects found in nature and repurposing items that would otherwise go to household recycling or waste.

Reaching older people and Reminiscence

Chatterboxes for elderly residents of Moulsecoomb and Bevendean evolved in lockdown as people emerged from shielding. Partnering with *The Bevy Community Pub* in Moulsecoomb, we supported their lunch club for older people experiencing isolation, including those living with dementia and Alzheimer's. With a focus on fostering positive mental health and wellbeing, our reminiscence boxes are designed to unlock treasured memories of days gone by and spark the meaningful sharing of past events. These lunch clubs offered social interaction and enrichment activities alongside a much-needed hearty lunch.

ARTS AND HERITAGE:

Our Place

Our Place, Brighton Festival's flagship community initiative ran for its second year in Moulsecoomb and Bevendean. Gladrags led in artistic liaison and support to the initiative's artist in residence, and as part of a local steering committee oversaw a series of free festival workshops and a final community event for neighbourhood residents who have less opportunities to access arts and culture. We again engaged our volunteer team in creative output that is both fulfilling for them and beneficial to the residency. As well as sharing their skills during residency workshops, this year our team repurposed upholstery and book-binding waste materials to produce a series of fabric birds, accompanying flocks of paper birds that formed part of a community murmuration event.

Jubilee

We supported several celebrations, most notably providing:

- a travelling Royal Tent, a free dress-up experience that invited interactive play inspired by queens, kings and courts of history and of the imagination. From The *Bevendean Jubilee Picnic* and *The Bevy Pub's Jubilee BBQ* to *CHOMP Moulsecoomb's Jubilee Family Session*, children and adults from low-income backgrounds were able to join in the festivities at these free, inclusive community days.
- a Jubilee lunch for elders, to which we brought memorabilia and artefacts from Jubilees in times gone by, along with a replica of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation dress and crown. The exchange of stories that spanned the decades lifted spirits and offered a cheery reminder of the joy of celebration and the marking of significant national events.
- free loan of community bunting – adding Jubilee themed garlands to the collection we built during our community lockdown bunting project.

Dorset Opera

Commissioned by production designer Stewart Charlesworth we took on the styling of large-scale opera chorus costumes for a professional production of *The Magic Flute*. Building on the styling service we began offering independent schools last year, the Magic Flute project pooled the expertise of designers and makers in our volunteer team, both to curate the costume collection and mentor other volunteers keen to gain new skills. Inspired by our sustainable approach, this saw the beginning of a creative partnership with the designer that includes the repurposing of damaged or underused costumes and production design methods that resist single-use materials and new purchase of garments.

Aspiring Professionals

Gladrags' decades-long experience of supporting fringe and aspiring professional arts practitioners has driven the flexible approach we offer to their theatre, film and performance companies. With further funding cuts across the arts, these troupes consistently acknowledge that our subsidised costume provision to them is key to their ability to produce professional quality productions on extremely low budgets. In this way we promote equal arts access, both for those entertaining communities, and for the audiences who can subsequently attend affordable productions and screenings, including the following across this year:

- Celebration of classic plays by *Greek to Me* and *Brighton Shakespeare Company*.
- New adaptations of novels from *Half-time Orange Theatre* and *Frankly Speaking Dance Productions*.
- New writing from *Different Theatre* and *Manly Hubris Films*.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

Community

In addition to celebratory drama and performance, our preloved costume collection provides enrichment to a broad spectrum of other projects including:

- Christmas joy sensitively brought to people for whom seasonal festivities are particularly difficult, with staff at *Martlets Hospice Care* and volunteers at *Kennedy Street Recovery Cafe* dressing the part.
- provision of safe, fun, creative space to explore gender identity and gender expression with *Brighton Youth Centre*'s drag workshops and *Kidzone*'s drag storytelling for children.
- educational, issue-based arts, such as *Friends Families and Travellers'* touring show *"Crystal's Vardo"*, raising awareness of Gypsy Roma Traveller history and culture; *Carousel*'s mini films, championing the rights of artists with a learning disability to flourish.

Food Security

With the cost-of-living an increasing concern nationally and locally, we provided support and subsidised costume packages for projects bridging the food poverty gap by:

- expanding our collaboration further with the theatre company *One Fell Swoop* and supporting their efforts to raise funds for *Fareshare Sussex*, the surplus food redistribution charity. By providing 200 costumes for free and assisting with costume design for their *Shakespeare Unlocked* festival we resourced a series of outdoor Shakespeare plays and boosted the company's fundraising capability.

- resourcing *Very Local Food Hubs*, a free community event in Bevendean, with food themed costumes to support the event's aim to celebrate and educate around sustainable, affordable food systems.
- fully subsidising *Lewes Foodbank*, who saw volunteers fundraising by dressing up to create awareness of their cause and raise vital funds.

Education

We are always listening to the evolving needs of schools and this year saw us:

- research new resource boxes: *Windrush Generation* and *A Century of Protest*, that would shine a light on key moments of history identified by teachers as deserving of more prominence.

- work with the SENCo at *Moulsecoomb Primary School* to curate a series of bespoke dress-up cases linked to curriculum literacy topics. These topics were brought to life through role-play and interactive activities for children across the school with special educational needs.

- sharing our skills and resources by mentoring college students with costume or production responsibilities linked to their courses at *Greater Brighton Metropolitan College* and *IC Theatre*.

Scope of beneficiaries:

We maintained our aim to prioritise reaching both children and adults most in need by:

- continuing to tailor our resources to suit the individual needs of educational and community projects addressing disadvantage.
- maintaining the same level of costume provision subsidy to our beneficiaries (unchanged for groups most in need since 2010).
- delivering our community outreach programme in partnership with food security organisations in the most deprived areas of our city.

We increased our reach to new beneficiary-groups by:

- Boosting our online presence on social media platforms and pro-actively engaging with local schools, community groups and the local arts sector.

  Brighton and Hove primary schools *Mile Oak* and *Aldrington* benefitted from resource boxes to enrich classroom activities; further afield, special schools *Manor Green* in Crawley and *Springboard Education* in Lancing hired costumes and props to support sensory drama workshops and performance. *Burgess Hill Theatre Club* and *Sackville Players* were able to add authenticity to their staging of era-specific plays and *Kidzone* ran a series of free children's creative workshops inspired by their discovery of our costume resource.

- launching a newsletter in 2022, increasing engagement and awareness of our charitable remit and sustainable costume provision. This brought us to the attention of socially conscious businesses who commissioned our dress-up corners and photobooths to further their community missions:

  - *Moulsecoomb Place* ran two free community fun days linked to their consultation process with the community living locally to their new development site.

  - *Fever Club* chose Gladrags as their 2022 charity to support via their Christmas club night; our photobooth for the night was additionally linked to our Winter Warmer fundraising appeal, enabling us to raise funds from partygoers.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

Sustainable networking

We deepened our connections with like-minded organisations to further common goals around promoting a waste-free approach to textile resources which included:

- closed loop rehoming between Gladrags and the Adur-based *Scrap Space*, a scheme which enables community access to low cost reclaimed materials for art, craft and play.

- planning an awareness campaign around textile sustainability, with initial discussions had with *Sew Fabulous* (community sewing), *Smarter Uniforms* (repurpose and resale of school uniform) and *Super Looper* (pre-loved baby clothes hire).

- teaming up with local reuse and repair charities and businesses to consult on The *Brighton and Hove City Council's* Textile Champions Scheme which supports residents to become active anti-textile waste ambassadors.

We launched our *Revive to Rewear* programme which comprised:

- a new textile sustainability placement for volunteers as well as specialised repair training and upskilling opportunities

- a new Rehome-it! network, and planned community days to increase the repurposing of surplus items to community groups

Textile sustainability placement:

This placement acknowledges the need to provide volunteering opportunities that:

- can act as pathways to employment for young people and those stepping back into the workplace.
- are relevant to the modern world of work where implementing sustainability practices are increasingly important.

Since sustainability is stitched into everything we do at Gladrags, we recognised that we are equipped to provide a modular placement whereby volunteers can develop their knowledge of sustainable textile practices in action, whilst equally supporting our in-house costume provision and community outreach work. By providing certification to them we can further support their future routes into employment. Our first three placements began in March 2022.

Rehome-it!

Our rehoming scheme redistributes surplus costumes and textiles for free within the Sussex community, especially to schools and grassroots community groups. This scheme prompts us to assess the relevance and usage of our existing costume collections, and to pass on items donated to Gladrags that are more suited to other projects including the following:

- Warm street wear for the clothing hub run by *First Base Day Centre* for homeless people
- Partywear and festival costume for party clothes swaps run by *Sew-Fabulous Community Sewing Studio*
- Dress-up costumes given to local families during our collaborative family sessions, as part of our Winter Warmer Programme

We were able to save damaged or scrap items from going to landfill, for example providing:

- distressed clothing for further adaptation by theatre designer Stewart Charlesworth for his Opera chorus costume design, depicting 'dustbowl 1930s depression' in a production of *The Magic Flute* at Dorset Opera.
- saved fabric scraps from our own upcycling and repair projects to gift to the *Scrap-Space* scheme.

The launch of our online Rehome-it! Network took this ethos a step further, inviting a circular economy ethos amongst arts, education and theatre initiatives to pass on unused costumes, textiles and props amongst themselves such as:

- *Southwick Players* donating 100 costumes and fabric lengths on the roll to *Littlehampton Academy*
- *Sew Fabulous Community Studio* donating 20 coffee sacks to *Chomp Moulsecoomb*

By actively encouraging organisations to join and utilise the network we quickly reached a 400 strong membership of people signing up to a waste-free approach to costume and textile resources and becoming influencers within their own networks.

Vintage Sales

The selling of our vintage stock is a means of repurposing sellable items and dress fabrics less relevant to the beneficiary groups accessing our Re-home-it! scheme. Via our online and in-person sales we are able to:

- align our circular fashion ethos by using the re-sale of clothing to fund our mission, serving beneficiary groups in Sussex.
- promote the purchase of second-hand clothing and be actively part of the solution to textile waste.

A shift in public awareness and attitudes to the impact of fast fashion has enabled us to:

- reach new audiences seeking to reduce their personal impact on textile waste and opt out of 'purchasing new'.
- reach audiences searching for affordable retro styles and quality fabrics.
- branch out successfully into mini outlets, selling stock via established Vintage clothing shops: *Up North, Department* and *Showgirl Vintage* as well as the new business, *Fabric Tree*.

VOLUNTEERS:

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maintained our commitment to supporting this with tailored opportunities and since working with us in 2022-23:

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- offering subsidised access to arts and culture events, acknowledging the link between volunteers' work for Gladrags and the projects and organisations we resource.

Wellbeing

For most, volunteering with Gladrags also fulfils a personal need, such as: social interaction; gaining new skills or sharing existing ones; building confidence; gaining workplace experience; being immersed amongst costume and being helpful in a creative environment. We place high importance on a sense of belonging and community within our volunteer team and recognise how important this is to ensure that individual volunteers feel valued and equally that the charity can deliver on its aims and objectives. We provide opportunities both within volunteering roles and via social gatherings for volunteers to connect meaningfully with each other and with the organisation. We organise a range of social events throughout the year and during National Volunteer's Week, with 2022 culminating in a Christmas Feast and wreath-making workshop.

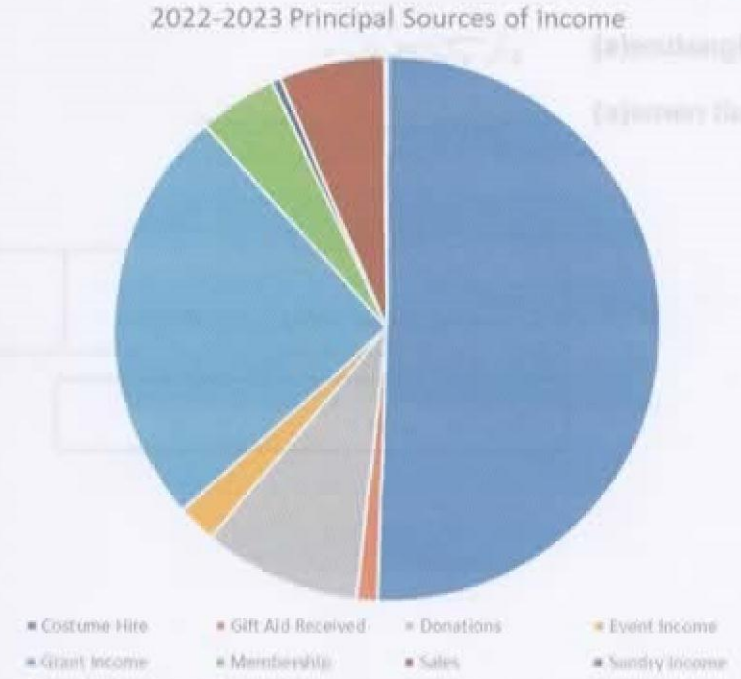
We responded to the impact of the increasing cost-of-living crisis on some amongst the team by providing additional food supplies and producing a wellbeing pack of resources to guide people through advice and support services.

INCOME GENERATION

Having the ability to raise our own regular source of revenue is key to our organisational sustainability, building unrestricted reserves that ensure we are able to maintain our costume provision and support our team in the immediate term as well as plan costume outreach and services in the longer-term. Our principal revenue model links costume hire fees directly to our resource provision: beneficiaries contribute at a very minimal level in order to loan costumes and resource boxes affordably; this service is then subsidised by the top-rate hire fees paid by professionals and partygoers.

Income from grants and significant donors are equally crucial to our capacity to deliver services and activities to our beneficiaries. Repeat funding from *Arnold Burton Trust, The Brian Mitchell Settlement* and *East Brighton Trust* was boosted by new grants from the *Now! Fund* and the *Amy Hart Foundation*.

Our Winter Warmer Appeal, as our first ever significant public fundraising endeavour raised £3000 towards our growing community outreach programme, whilst £5,700 revenue from Vintage Sales and events further boosted the resilience of our funding strategy.



Section E Financial review

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

The charity aims to hold at least £8000 in reserve to guarantee necessary immediate and short-term core expenditure in the subsequent quarter.

Reserves are held to ensure that: essential core and operational costs can be covered; longer term plans can be committed to; unforeseen circumstances can be mitigated. Reserves are reviewed quarterly; £18,000 is the rolling minimum reserve limit per quarter to enable optimum operational continuity; £8000 the bare minimum unrestricted reserves at any one time to ensure viability.

Section G Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s) [signature]

Full name(s) HEATHER BUTLER

Position CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

Date 30.1.24

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name: Gladrags Community Costume Trust

No (if any): 1132084

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from 1/4/2022 To 31/3/2023

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Designated funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Hire Fees	45,976	-	-	45,976	27,104
Membership	4,250	-	-	4,250	2,615
Grants		22,000	-	22,000	22,698
Donations	1,570		6,940	8,510	6,252
Gift Aid Claims	335	-	810	1,145	-
Employment Allowance	-	-	-	-	-
Event Fees	2,065	-	-	2,065	-
Sales	5,711	-	-	5,711	5,143
Other	910	-	-	910	205
***Sub total** (Gross income for AR)*	60,816	22,000	7,750	90,566	64,018
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	60,816	22,000	7,750	90,566	64,018
A3 Payments					
Premises (rent,business rates)	1,285	2,716	-	4,001	4,399
Insurance		747	-	747	632
Office,Utilities & Maintenance	767	5,677	538	6,982	3,831
Equipment	265	129	-	394	627
Staff & Volunteers	32,322	1,385	-	33,707	30,113
Workshops	-	-	-	-	-
Sessional Fees	26,404	8,190	4,063	38,658	32,376
PR & Communications	168	-	-	168	-
Professional Fees	-	-	810	810	750
Stock & Stock Care	1,397	74	-	1,471	1,653
Sales	277			277	337
Fundraising	-	-	-	-	-
Misc	317		-	317	294
Training	-	-	-	-	50
Sub total	63,203	18,917	5,411	87,531	75,062
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	63,203	18,917	5,411	87,531	75,062
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 2,387	3,083	2,339	3,036	- 11,044
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	41,394	17,918	4,375	63,687	74,731
Cash funds this year end	39,007	21,001	6,714	66,723	63,687

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Designated funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank less amounts due	39,007	21,001	6,714
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds (agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	39,007	21,001	6,714

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the			-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities	Current Liabilities	Unrestricted		
	HMRC	Unrestricted		
	Pension	Unrestricted		
	Independent Examination	Unrestricted	600	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	H Butler	HEATHER BUTLER	30.1.24

GLADRAGS COMMUNITY COSTUME TRUST
(CHARITY NUMBER 1122704)

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF GLADRAGS COMMUNITY COSTUME TRUST FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 March 2023.

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011("the Act").

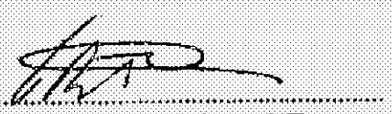
I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in any material respect:

(i). accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or

(ii). the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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



C R Tyler FCA; DChA; FCIE
Chartered Accountant
Flat 24 Wellingtonia Court,
Laine Close,
Brighton
East Sussex
BN1 6TD

Date 31st January 2024

GLADRAGS COMMUNITY COSTUME TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1122704

Accounts

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

	Period start date				Period end date		
	Day	Month	Year		Day	Month	Year
From	1st	April	2021	To	31st	March	2022

Section A Reference and administration details

Charity name	Gladrags Community Costume Trust
Other names charity is known by	Gladrags Community Costume Resource
Registered charity number (if any)	1122704

Charity's principal address	Unit 10, Westergate Business Centre
	Westergate Road
	Brighton
Postcode	BN2 4QN

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Heather Butler	Chair		Trustees
	Neil Border	Trustee	4.11.21-31.3.22	Trustees
3	Nigel Watson	Trustee	1.4.21-7.2.22	Trustees
4	Harriet Roberts	Trustee	1.4.21-24.8.21	Trustees

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

Vania Mills

Section B Structure, governance and management

Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document (eg. trust deed, constitution)	Trust Deed
How the charity is constituted (eg. trust, association, company)	Charitable Trust
Trustee selection methods (eg. appointed by, elected by)	**Appointed by Trustees**

Section C Objectives and activities

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

Educating the public in historical and world dress by providing low-cost costumes and related resources as an educational tool.

To advance education of the public by providing various costumes and related resources at low cost as an educational tool.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)

OVERVIEW:

Gladrags is a unique, eco-minded provider of costume resources and expertise which serve to further the activities of our beneficiary groups. Planet-friendly **principles are key to our ethos: it is by virtue of both fostering and promoting the concept of re-using costumes since 1994 that we have built a resource of 10,000 items, 95% of which are donated stock that we repurpose and adapt to benefit the** community time and time again.

We support and enrich the projects of our beneficiary groups by offering the following:

- **Affordable hire of pre-loved costumes and artefacts** to organisations who **would otherwise struggle to afford or have access to them. We were able to continue offering these resources throughout the year, in line with evolving government covid guidelines and eventual lifting of restrictions.**

  Our beneficiary groups include schools and colleges; libraries and day centres; community and youth groups; charities and not-for-profit organisations; amateur and fringe arts; professional theatre and arts with a socially conscious remit; further and higher education. Principal resources are:

  - **historical, world dress and show costumes and accessories for children and adults, suited particularly to educational practice, performance, wellbeing projects and community arts.**
  - resource boxes: costumes and artefacts tailored to a specific project or **theme, most commonly to support primary school topics, promoting 'historical-detective' work and role-play activities.**
  - **reminiscence boxes: containing authentic vintage clothing and everyday** objects selected to fit an era or theme.

- **Reminiscence and heritage resources that support memory-sharing** activities, within a context of health and wellbeing. 2021-22 saw these events still scaled back, yet we were able to provide Reminiscence Boxes, vintage **clothing and artefacts for:**

  - **heritage exhibitions and activities.**
  - reminiscence sessions and interactive activities for older people **experiencing isolation, including those living with dementia and Alzheimer's.**

- **Store visits** that provide additional educational or wellbeing support. Due to maintaining a protocol of reduced numbers of visitors to the store, we had to curb group trips throughout the year, which would ordinarily include:
  - nurture visits for children, young people and adults who experience additional disadvantage, exploring the role of costume as part of a project's process and gaining experiential access to culture and the arts
  - mentoring of school pupils and university students with drama or costume-based assignments

- **Costume-making resources:**
  - Sewing equipment and recycled fabrics to resource user groups' own costume-making projects and encourage sustainable practise.
  - Library collection: referencing historical dress of ordinary people; world and cultural dress; affordable, local costume resources.

- **Costume storage:**
  - Provision of a free shared storage facility for groups' own costumes, hence ensuring their costumes remain in use and that all groups benefit from the subsequently broadened range of costumes available to them from our store.

COMMUNITY:

Through our Community Outreach Programme we reach further groups and individuals who experience disadvantage and isolation. In this second year of the pandemic we were cautiously able to relaunch our community activities, with a particular focus on partnering with projects combatting food poverty to deliver the following:

- **Creative dress-up and storytelling activities** designed to encourage a sense of play for children and families experiencing life challenges. Costume becomes the catalyst for the creation of characters, scenarios and social interaction, whereby children stretch their imaginations and live out their dreams and hopes.

- **Reminiscence sessions** with older people who come together to be socially active, often as a means of combating social isolation. Our sessions contribute to their wellbeing with:
  - themed memory boxes that ignite the meaningful sharing of past experiences
  - pre-covid, fancy dress photo-booths that encourage playful activity and a reminder of the sense of fun that can be had at any stage of life

- **Textile crafts** for children and young people, within a context of promoting emotional wellbeing and developing self-confidence.

VOLUNTEERS:

We support a diverse community of volunteers, and we continued to provide opportunities for people with a range of learning and support needs, tailoring roles to their interests and aspirations. Where we could, we provided training and supported work placements within the organisation that maintained self-confidence or supported specific pathways into the creative arts industry and employment.

Trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)

You may choose to include further statements, where relevant, about:

- policy on grantmaking;
- policy programme related investment;
- contribution made by volunteers.

SUSTAINAIBILITY:

- Environmental sustainability frames our aims and objectives, with the re-use of resources at the core of our ethos and the services we offer, as well as being integral to the communication of key organisational values. Our long-standing commitment to be part of the solution to a sustainable textile industry and our planet-friendly practices influence organisations and individuals and ensure that our own carbon footprint remains minimal.

  The 10,000 costumes we share with our local communities are predominantly comprised of donated and recycled stock, some of which are further adapted by us for improved costume purpose. We encourage beneficiary groups to gift their un-used costumes to Gladrags and we store items for other groups, to re-share these within our communities. The costume-making support and recycled materials we offer groups further promotes sustainable costume practice.

  Our re-homing scheme, whereby we donate surplus costumes and artefacts, brings together our principles of minimal waste with opportunities to provide additional support to the charities, schools and community projects who benefit from the scheme.

- An ethos of wider participation and social inclusion is a key aspect to the delivery of and access to our services and we recognise that our organisational purpose is sustained by this focus. Consequently, we are committed to reaching community groups and individuals experiencing disadvantage and isolation and achieve this further through our own outreach projects.

- We actively recruit, support, and develop volunteers with wide-ranging skills and learning needs and celebrate the inclusivity of our team as an organisational asset. The wellbeing of our volunteers and staff is paramount to Gladrags' sustainability, which was brought sharply into focus during the pandemic, when we placed great emphasis on ensuring our team was well supported and felt connected.

Section D Achievements and performance

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

- **PROVISION OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES:**

Gladrags reached 7,100 people in 2021-22, by supplying costumes and related resources to projects they participated in or attended. Closer to pre-pandemic figures, this was a significant increase on the 2,400 beneficiaries reached in the previous year when our capacity was severely challenged by Covid lockdown restrictions. Despite the continued impact on the arts, education and social gatherings, the easing of restrictions from April 2021 saw a gear-change. Our resilience and capacity to continually adapt our service made it possible to support our beneficiaries in their cautious ventures back into live arts, in-person educational practise and wellbeing opportunities. Across the year we contributed to the following:

- Education: complementing interactive approaches to learning, in particular adding context to social history or world cultures; creating access opportunities to arts and culture in an educational context.
- Sustainability: promoting a planet-friendly approach to costume, clothing and fashion; responsibly re-homing costumes and recycled items suitable for craft and textile projects; resourcing climate-focussed initiatives.
- Health and well-being: stimulating and nurturing memory, imagination, creativity and play within our outreach sessions. Providing activities that specifically promote positive mental health and wellbeing, and that develop self-confidence and awareness of personal abilities.
- Community cohesion: bringing people together through live and performing arts and in shared creative activities, to become socially active again.
- Celebration: adding colour and magic to performance-based projects, theatre and film, social and cultural events.

- **COMMUNITY OUTREACH:**

Within Gladrags' aims and objectives, we strive to reach communities most in need of the transformational quality of our costume provision. With the loss of jobs and rising costs in the wake of the pandemic, our Outreach Programme focussed principally on reaching children, families and older people living in East Brighton and experiencing food poverty. In addition to being most local to Gladrags, the wards in this area fall within the 10% most deprived in the UK.

Family Activities

Our principal activities draw on our extensive costume collection to create themes within which lively and interactive dressing-up, storytelling and play is framed. We partner with local organisations who support families living on low-income and experiencing disadvantage.

As groups began to meet again, we grew our partnership with *CHOMP Moulsecoomb,* with a joint aim to bring relief and joy to local children and families who can rarely, if ever, afford to treat themselves. *CHOMP Moulsecoomb is a* free lunch project, filling the hunger gap in school holidays by providing a nutritious meal for families who struggle on a daily basis to feed a whole family. In addition to bringing creative activities to sessions, we grew the connection between *CHOMP Moulsecoomb* and our volunteer team, enabling sessions to go ahead by ensuring a full complement of helpers.

The transformational lens of our dress-up corners saw children being imaginative and active in their play, enabling them to step out of challenging life situations for the day and inviting families to reconnect in a fun and playful way. We began to offer textile crafts, such as summer collages and Autumn bug-making. Many families attending have children with divergent needs and we recognised that the kinaesthetic nature of these activities was particularly nurturing and inclusive. Craft projects were designed to be easily repeatable at home, using objects found in nature and repurposing items that would otherwise go to household recycling or waste.

Young People

We collaborated with *Sew-Fabulous* to run a sewing workshop with the *Young Women's Group* based at the *67 Centre Youth Club* in Moulsecoomb. Responding to the request from the group, we supported them in making and appliqueing their own shopping bags. Using recycled materials, the young women gained confidence in acquiring new skills and a sense of achievement in producing something both purposeful and appealing that they could be proud of.

Our partnership with *Sew Fabulous* grew from a common aim to promote a sustainable approach to fashion and clothing, as well as dedicating workshops to people with limited opportunities.

Reaching older people and Reminiscence

Chatterboxes for elderly residents of Moulsecoomb and Bevendean evolved in lockdown as people emerged from shielding. Partnering with *The Bevy Community Pub* in Moulsecoomb, we supported their lunch club for older people experiencing isolation, including those living with dementia and Alzheimer's.

With a focus on fostering positive mental health and wellbeing, these sessions helped to rebuild social interaction amongst the group, whilst providing them with a much-need hearty lunch. Our reminiscence and nature boxes helped them to reconnect to the outside world and re-engage with sharing memories of happier times. Our suitcase record player and large selection of vinyl singles from the 1940s to 1970s accompanied sessions, creating a jukebox feel. Lunch guests delighted in choosing their favourite tracks, with many a sing-along moment enjoyed and many a joyful memory ignited.

ARTS AND HERITAGE:

Our Place

***Our Place* is *Brighton Festival's* flagship community initiative produced in** partnership with outlying communities, where residents have less **opportunities to access arts and culture. *Our Place* was launched in Moulsecoomb and Bevendean in 2021 and Gladrags sat on the steering committee, helping to oversee a series of free festival events, and providing direct support to the initiative's artist in residence, Jenny Staff. We engaged** our volunteer team in preparing repurposed textile art packs to resource **Jenny's Willow Arch Art Trail, assist her with community workshops and** make the 8 textile artworks that formed the centrepiece of each arch.

Vindication Swim

***RELSAH Productions*, a local independent film company shot their latest feature *Vindication Swim* between 2019 and 2022. Inevitably challenged by covid restrictions, they determinedly found ways of running outdoor film** shoots throughout this period. Gladrags provided costume support, advice, **and a full styling service to ensure they could stay true to their 1920s setting. This included running wardrobe on set for larger-scale scenes.**

Tide Mills Project

The *Tide Mills Project* was a multi-disciplinary creative heritage project **whereby the unique and diverse history of the lost village of Tide Mills was** brought to life through a variety of creative and artistic disciplines. Gladrags **collaborated with the *LYT Productions* team, taking on the costume design and wardrobe for the 85 strong community who conveyed key moments in** the village's history during the celebratory week in September 2021. In **addition to supporting and engaging with this large-scale free event,** Gladrags' involvement meant we could also provide styling, design and **wardrobe mentoring opportunities for some of our volunteers.**

- **COSTUME RESOURCES and PROVISION OF SERVICES:**

With Food Poverty nationally an increasing concern, we collaborated further with *One Fell Swoop* and their efforts to raise funds for *Fareshare Sussex*, the surplus food redistribution charity. By providing 200 costumes for free and assisting with costume design for their *Shakespeare Unlocked* festival we resourced six Shakespeare plays in a local park, and boosted **the company's fundraising capability, directing a larger sum to *Fareshare*.**

With pupils returning to school and restrictions easing, our resource boxes **were back in demand. We developed an online brochure and maintained the click & collect service we had developed in 2020 as a covid-safe measure. This acknowledged the benefit felt by teachers of having this extra layer of support even post-pandemic. Our resource boxes enabled** teaching staff to offer interactive approaches to learning with artefacts and **costume that:**

- **brought history to life for pupils learning about topics from Vikings to** Evacuees, or key historical figures such as Mary Seacole and Ernest Shackleton.

- **gave context to world cultures for children learning about African art, Chinese New Year and the adventures of Phileas Fogg and his visits** to various countries around the globe.

- **provided sensory learning experiences for students at special schools:** ***Woodland Meed, Cuckmere House*** **and** ***St John's College.***

The pandemic highlighted the mental health and wellbeing benefits that are met by drama and creative expression (as surveyed by the Arts **Council in 2022). We resourced a surge of local projects and events taking place across Sussex from the summer of 2021 to reignite the live relationship between performer and spectator and bring communities** together again. These included:

- **Theatre and musical shows staged by children and produced by** ***Create Space Arts*** **in Hurstpierpoint,** ***Kaleidoscope Theatre*** **in Lewes and** ***Windmill Youth Theatre*** **in Brighton as well as Stagecoach schools** spanning Hove, Haywards Heath, East Grinstead and Hastings.

- **Amateur and fringe theatre from the very local** ***New Venture Theatre, Rottingdean Drama Society, Swanwing Productions and Brighton Little Theatre,*** **to** ***Meeching Amateur Dramatics, Ditchling Players, West*** *Chiltington Group* and *Henfield Theatre* further afield.

Community Bunting:

200 metres of bunting that was made in lockdown became a free resource **that we loaned to community events. Our Community Lockdown Bunting Project in 2020 had seen us partnering with** *Sew Fabulous* **and reaching out to volunteers from both our organisations as well as local people,** offering a creative, hopeful activity that they could do easily from home. **Across our city and beyond this project saw people of all ages putting their fabric scraps and worn-out clothes to good use, by creating single bunting flags. Ultimately these were brought together into themed bunting lines to share freely within our communities post-lockdown.**

By May 2021, as outdoor events began springing up, the bunting found its purpose in a variety of events including:

- *Brighton Festival's Our Place* **offering to** *Moulsecoomb Primary School* **of the touring show '***Arbor the Tree***'. The entire school field was dressed with community bunting garlands.**

- ***Communities Rising Conference*****, hosted by the charity** ***Rise*** **that** helps people affected by domestic abuse.

- ***Reskill, Re-use, Refashion*** **sustainability event hosted by** *Sew-Fabulous*.

Scope of beneficiaries:

We maintained our aim to prioritise reaching both children and adults most **in need by**:

- **continuing to tailor our resources to suit the needs of educational and** community projects addressing disadvantage
- **delivering our community outreach programme in the most deprived areas**
- working in partnership with like-minded charities and community **organisations**

We saw the return of pre-pandemic beneficiary groups, a testament to:

- **relationships built with beneficiaries, ensuring they always feel valued and attended to according to their differing needs and requirements.**
- our ability to adapt and develop our resources and services in **response both to the challenges the lockdowns presented and the subsequent change in circumstances for beneficiaries post-lockdown.**

We increased our reach to new beneficiary-groups by:

- **pro-actively engaging with local schools, community groups, statutory bodies and key arts and cultural institutions, in particular reaching** new special schools and arts groups servicing disabled children and young people such as: *Palatine Primary School* in Worthing, *Oaks College* **in Tonbridge and *Superstar Arts* in Shoreham.**
- **promoting ourselves further afield, reaching new user-groups such as** *Manorfield Primary School* in Burgess Hill, *Beechwood School* in Tunbridge Wells, *West Chiltington Theatre* and *Alfriston Players* in **their respective Sussex villages.**

Service improvements

We maintained an ongoing core objective to adapt and develop our resources and services to suit the needs of different beneficiary groups. We made use of the quieter times to:

- **reorganise and thin out our stock to ensure our collections remain relevant to the needs of our beneficiaries.**
- **alter costume storage and display to further improve viewing of and** access to costumes and props.
- **update and improve our customer-facing procedures to provide a more efficient service.**

❖ ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Re-homing scheme

This scheme prompts us to assess the relevance and usage of our existing costume collections, and to pass on items donated to Gladrags that are more suited to other projects. In line with increased societal awareness **about recycling, re-use and reducing waste, we continued to receive a steady stream of donations. As well as adding choice pieces to our hire collections, we share these donated costumes and props amongst** community groups, charities and schools, providing and promoting solutions to tackle clothing and textile waste. Practical, modern clothing we pass on **to charities working with homeless people, refugees and those experiencing financial difficulties. Unusable items and surplus textile remnants are re-homed to Scrap-space in Shoreham, for re-use in community and education** settings across West Sussex. From May 2021 we were able to fully re-launch the scheme again, resourcing the following:

- **Schools far and wide, such as: *Littlehampton Academy*, who were able to build a costume room from scratch with our help; *Oaks Special School* in Worthing who use costume for sensory-lead drama and play sessions and *Chailey School* who were staging their first full-scale show in years.**

- **Community art projects as part of Brighton Festival 2021: *Our Place Moulsecoomb and Bevendean*, with fabric scraps and haberdashery craft packs, enabling community groups and schools to contribute to the Willow Arches art trail; *Museum of Ordinary People*'s exhibition** *'HOME'* at the *Phoenix Arts Centre*, a collaborative project with **members of the public, curating collections of everyday objects, photos and documents that chronicled real people's lives.**

- **Charitable clothing projects in Brighton such as the Interview Scheme** at the *Old Boat Community Centre*, whereby formal interview clothing **is loaned to low-income residents for free, and the clothing hub run by *First Base Day Centre* for homeless people.**

We were able to save damaged items from going to landfill, for example **providing:**

- **distressed shirts for a 'Sewing Bee' style refashioning competition at *Sew Fabulous' Reskill-Re-use-Refashion* sustainability event in** Summer 2021

- **distressed and overly stained garments for costume upcycling by Ryan Laight, theatre designer at *Chichester Festival Theatre*, for their** Christmas production of *Pinocchio*.

Vintage Sales

The selling of our vintage stock is a means of repurposing sellable items **and dress fabrics less relevant to the beneficiary groups accessing our re-homing scheme. It also means that we:**

- **align our circular fashion ethos by using the re-sale of clothing to fund our mission, serving beneficiary groups in Sussex.**
- **promote the purchase of second-hand clothing and are actively part of the solution to textile waste.**

The closing of clothing and fabric shops during covid lockdowns served as an opportunity for the public to reflect on their purchasing habits, and the impact of fast fashion. Despite the return to the high street for shoppers, the response to our eBay shop remained buoyant and enabled us to:

- **reach new audiences seeking to reduce their personal impact on textile waste and opt out of 'purchasing new'.**
- **reach audiences searching for affordable retro styles and quality fabrics.**
- **depend on a steady revenue stream, channelled back into our re-homing and recycling activities, as well as funding our school resource box scheme.**

In July our partner *Sew Fabulous* hosted a *Re-skill, Re-use, Re-Fashion* **community event, spotlighting sustainable approaches to fashion and** textile use. Gladrags raised £400 selling retro fabric remnants and vintage clothing. We also ran recycled textile craft activities and promoted our own sustainable ethos and community work.

In early December we held our second covid-safe Christmas Market involving local makers as well as the sale our vintage clothes and fabric. **With our invitation to customers to shop local, support independent makers** and reduce their carbon footprint **we raised £1100.**

❖ **VOLUNTEERS:**

Wellbeing

We place high importance on a sense of belonging and community within our volunteer team and recognise how important this is to ensure that the charity can meet the needs of its beneficiaries. For most, volunteering with Gladrags fulfils a personal need, such as: social interaction; gaining new skills or sharing existing ones; building confidence; gaining workplace **experience; being immersed amongst costume and being helpful in a creative environment. In 2021-22 this was particularly reflected in the re-adjusting of volunteer roles to match people's evolving circumstances.** Combined with the team connection and support structure we maintained **remotely throughout the pandemic, this saw 90% of our pre-Covid regular volunteers return to Gladrags.**

Opportunities:

Over the course of the year, 59 volunteers helped us to maintain our resources, deliver activities and serve our beneficiaries and we welcomed 30 new volunteers to the team. Our capacity built up over the year, in line with the government roadmap guidelines and ultimately compared favourably to the team of 79 volunteers in 2019-20.

We provided volunteer opportunities for people with a range of learning, social and career needs, including:

- 6 workplace and student module placements
- 5 supported volunteer opportunities for people with learning disabilities or mental health issues
- 15 roles for school pupils as well as university and FE students

Progression:

For some, volunteering at Gladrags is a stepping-stone on professional or personal journeys, bolstering portfolios and fostering self-confidence. We maintained our commitment to supporting this with tailored opportunities and since working with us in 2021-22:

- 2 volunteers gained the experience they needed to apply for college and university courses.
- 3 volunteers boosted their portfolios and styling experience to support their career paths in theatre design and costume wardrobe.
- 3 volunteers with chronic physical or mental health issues gained the confidence they had hoped for to step back into the world of work.

Engagement:

For others still their contribution to Gladrags is an integral part of their life, and by March 2022, 8 volunteers in our team had been with us for over 10 years; another 7 for over 3 years. We are proud of maintaining such a strong and experienced team and their resilience over the course of the pandemic created a solid core, a safe and welcoming environment for new volunteers to come into. We bolstered volunteer engagement by:

- ensuring that volunteers' roles evolved according to what was relevant and rewarding for them individually and ensuring that their effort and dedication was valued by the organisation.
- identifying projects, areas of interest or online study and training opportunities to signpost volunteers to.
- engaging volunteers in the charity's community activities and providing opportunities both within their roles and via social gatherings to connect meaningfully with the organisation and with their peers.

- offering subsidised access to arts and culture events, acknowledging the link between volunteers' work for Gladrags and the projects and organisations we resource.

❖ INCOME GENERATION

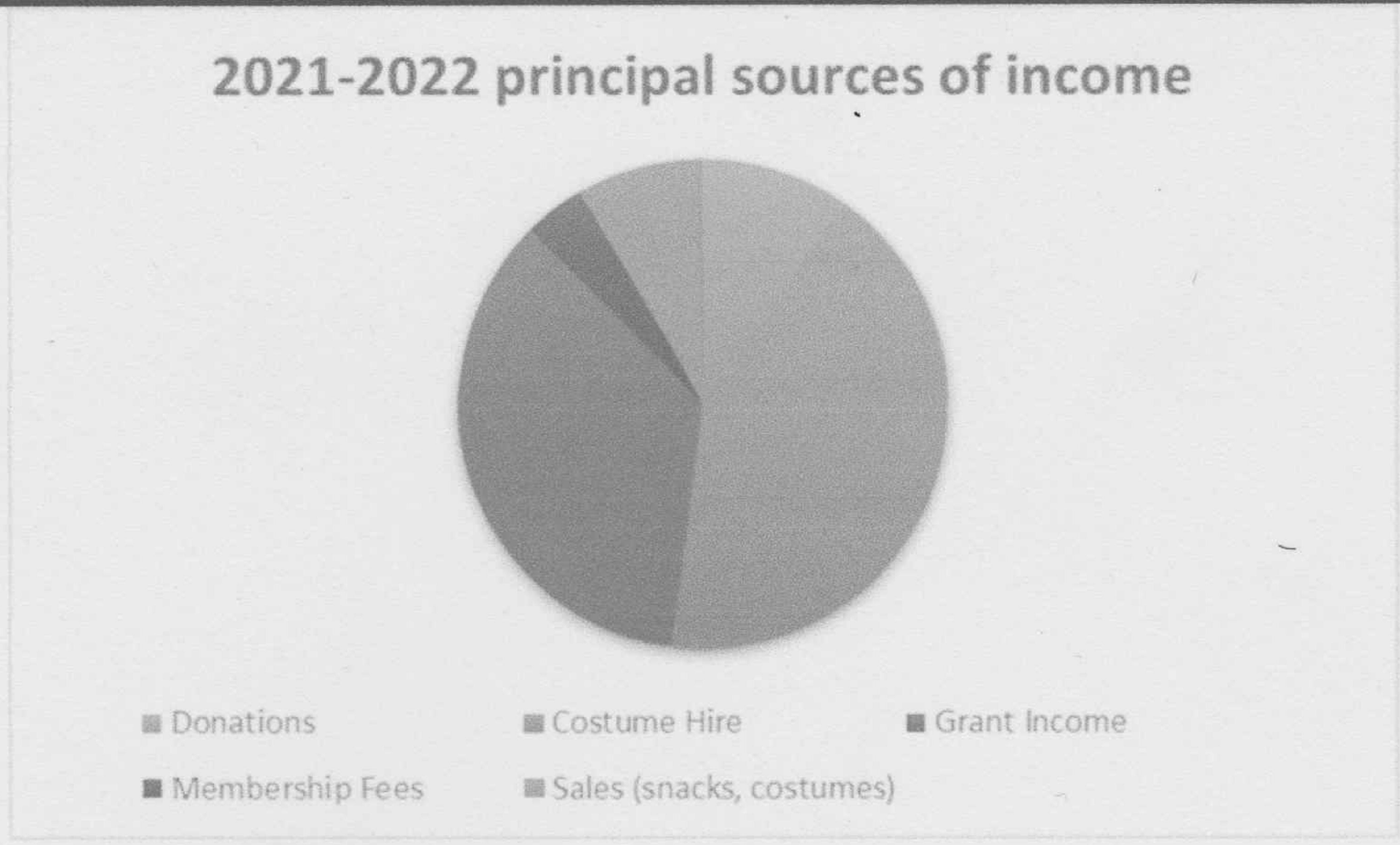
Our principal model of income generation works by linking costume hire fees directly to our resource provision: beneficiaries contribute at a very minimal level in order to loan costumes and resource boxes affordably; this service is then subsidised by the top-rate fees paid by professional hiring companies and party-hire customers. This previously resilient model was tested during the pandemic, however, as the backbone of our reserves policy it helped to ensure financial stability between 2020 and 2022. This principle of building free reserves has always been key to our organisational sustainability, ensuring that we are able to maintain our service and support our team in the immediate and long-term, and address crisis situations. For the first time in our history, we depended on it deeply and acknowledged more than ever the strength it gave our organisation.

We continued to receive business covid support and began to regrow fresh hire revenue, particularly boosted by increased income from independent schools. Being the first schools to be able to return to staging large-scale productions in the summer of 2021 and with most costume houses closed, they relied on Gladrags to fully resource their shows. A greater trust in our service ensued, resulting in a regular stream of costume orders throughout the academic year from independent school including *Hurstpierpoint College*, *Brighton College* and *Roedean School*.

Income from grants and significant donors are equally crucial to our capacity to deliver services and activities to our beneficiaries. Our long-standing support from *Arnold Burton Trust* was boosted by 25% and we secured funds from *The Brian Mitchell Settlement* for the first time, promising a fresh start to our outreach programme and ensuring we could dedicate more time and resources to our services to local schools.

Maintaining a focus on Vintage Sales provided further funds; anticipating that sales would diminish once high street shops re-opened, we diversified selling platforms and in-store selling opportunities.

Section D Achievements and performance



Section E Financial review

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

The charity aims to hold at least £8000 in reserve to guarantee necessary immediate and short-term core expenditure in the subsequent quarter.

Reserves are held to ensure that: essential core and operational costs can be covered; longer term plans can be committed to; unforeseen circumstances can be mitigated. Reserves are reviewed quarterly; £18,000 is the rolling minimum reserve limit per quarter to enable optimum operational continuity; £8000 the bare minimum unrestricted reserves at any one time to ensure viability.

Section G Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)	H Bde	
Full name(s)	HEATHER BUTLER	
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	CHAIR	
Date	30.1.23.	

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Gladrags Community Costume Trust	

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	01/04/2021	To	31/03/2022

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Designated funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Hire Fees	27,104	-	-	27,104	9,710
Membership	2,615	-	-	2,615	440
Grants	5,446	17,000	252	22,698	60,666
Donations	522	-	5,730	6,252	7,526
Gift Aid Claims	-			-	4,994
Employment Allowance		-	-	-	2,009
Event Fees		-	-	-	300
Sales	5,143	-	-	5,143	9,132
Other	205	-	-	205	23
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	41,036	17,000	5,982	64,018	94,801
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	41,036	17,000	5,982	64,018	94,801
A3 Payments					
Premises (rent,business rates)		4,399		4,399	3,488
Insurance		632		632	586
Office,Utilities & Maintenance	206	2,870	755	3,831	4,109
Equipment	361	266		627	660
Staff & Volunteers	30,113			30,113	31,319
Workshops				-	186
Sessional Fees	13,127	13,479	5,771	32,376	13,573
PR & Communications				-	
Professional Fees	550	200		750	500
Stock & Stock Care	1,653			1,653	813
Sales	337			337	621
Fundraising				-	
Misc	294			294	35
Training	50			50	
Sub total	46,691	21,845	6,526	75,061	55,890
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	46,691	21,845	6,526	75,061	55,890
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 5,655	- 4,845	- 544	- 11,043	38,911
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	47,049	22,763	4,919	74,731	35,820
Cash funds this year end	41,394	17,918	4,375	63,686	74,731

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

B1 Cash funds

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Designated funds to nearest £
	Bank less amounts due	41,394	17,918	4,375
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	**41,394**	**17,918**	**4,375**

(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))

B2 Other monetary assets

Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-

B3 Investment assets

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

B5 Liabilities

Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
Current Liabilities	**Unrestricted**		
HMRC	Unrestricted		
Pension	**Unrestricted**		
Independent Examination	Unrestricted	600	
		-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
H Rose.	HEATHER BUTLER	30.1.23

GLADRAGS COMMUNITY COSTUME TRUST
(CHARITY NUMBER 1122704)

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF GLADRAGS COMMUNITY COSTUME TRUST FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 March 2022.

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in any material respect:

(i). accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or

(ii). the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

C R Tyler FCA; DChA; FCIE
Flat 24 Wellingtonia Court,
Laine Close,
Brighton
East Sussex
BN1 6TD

Date 31st January 2023

GLADRAGS COMMUNITY COSTUME TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1122704

Accounts

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name	No (if any)
Gladrags Community Costume Trust	1122704

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	Period start date	To	Period end date
	01/04/2020		31/03/2021

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Designated funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Hire Fees	9,710	-	-	9,710	35,796
Membership	440	-	-	440	4,471
Grants	47,666	13,000	-	60,666	20,800
Donations	461	-	7,065	7,526	4,513
Gift Aid Claims	-	2,503	2,491	4,994	-
Employment Allowance	2,009	-	-	2,009	-
Event Fees	300	-	-	300	5,347
Sales	9,132	-	-	9,132	3,023
Other	23	-	-	23	360
***Sub total** (Gross income for AR)*	69,741	15,503	9,556	94,801	74,310
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	69,741	15,503	9,556	94,801	74,310
A3 Payments					
Premises (rent,business rates)	-	3,488	-	3,488	5,537
Insurance	-	586	-	586	565
Office,Utilities & Maintenance	1,049	2,224	836	4,109	4,024
Equipment	534	126	-	660	577
Staff & Volunteers	30,640	680	-	31,319	30,341
Workshops	-	186	-	186	100
Sessional Fees	6,451	3,486	3,636	13,573	19,683
PR & Communications	-	-	-	-	97
Professional Fees	-	-	500	500	748
Stock & Stock Care	769	44	-	813	1,631
Sales	821	-	-	821	206
Fundraising	-	-	-	-	39
Misc	35	-	-	35	29
Training	-	-	-	-	1,008
Sub total	40,098	10,820	4,972	55,890	64,584
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	40,098	10,820	4,972	55,890	64,584
Net of receipts/(payments)	29,643	4,683	4,585	38,910	9,726
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	17,406	18,080	334	35,820	26,094
Cash funds this year end	47,049	22,763	4,919	74,730	35,820

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Designated funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank less amounts due	47,049	22,763	4,919
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	**47,049**	**22,763**	**4,919**
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities	Current Liabilities	Unrestricted	300	
	HMRC	Unrestricted	1,635	
	Pension	Unrestricted	164	
	Independent Examination	Unrestricted	500	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
H. Butler.	H. BUTLER	27.1.2022

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From	Period start date			To	Period end date		
	Day	Month	Year		Day	Month	Year
	1st	April	2020		31st	March	2021

Section A Reference and administration details

Charity name	Gladrags Community Costume Trust
Other names charity is known by	Gladrags Community Costume Resource
Registered charity number (if any)	1122704
Charity's principal address	Unit 10, Westergate Business Centre
	Westergate road
	Brighton
	Postcode BN2 4QN

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Heather Butler	Chair		Trustees
2	Nigel Watson	Trustee		Trustees
4	Harriet Roberts	Trustee		Trustees

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

Vania Mills

Section B Structure, governance and management

Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document (eg. trust deed, constitution)	Trust Deed
How the charity is constituted (eg. trust, association, company)	Charitable Trust
Trustee selection methods (eg. appointed by, elected by)	Appointed by Trustees

Section C Objectives and activities

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

Educating the public in historical and world dress by providing low-cost costumes and related resources as an educational tool.

To advance education of the public by providing various costumes and related resources at low cost as an educational tool.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)

Gladrags is a unique, eco-minded provider of costume resources and expertise which serve to further the activities of our beneficiary groups. Planet-friendly principles are key to our ethos: it is by virtue of both fostering and promoting the concept of re-using costumes since 1994 that we have built a resource of 10,000 items, 95% of which are donated stock that we repurpose and adapt in order to benefit the community time and time again.

We support and enrich the projects of our beneficiary groups by offering the following:

- **Affordable hire of costumes and artefacts** to organisations who would otherwise struggle to afford or have access to them. We were able to continue offering these resources from August 2020 in line with evolving government covid guidelines and restrictions. Our beneficiary groups include schools and colleges; libraries and day centres; community and youth groups; charities and not-for-profit organisations; amateur and fringe arts; professional theatre and arts with a socially conscious remit; further and higher education. Principal resources on offer:
  - Historical, world dress and show costumes and accessories for children and adults, suited particularly to educational practise, performance, wellbeing projects and community arts.
  - Resource Boxes: costumes and artefacts tailored to a specific project or theme, most commonly to support primary school topics, promoting 'historical-detective' work and role-play activities.
  - Reminiscence Boxes: containing authentic vintage clothing and everyday objects selected to fit an era or theme.
- **Reminiscence and heritage resources** that support memory-sharing activities, within a context of health and wellbeing. 2020-21 saw these events scaled back, however resources were used for reminiscence sessions we delivered ourselves in covid-safe settings.
- **Store visits** that provide additional educational or wellbeing support. Due to maintaining a protocol of reduced numbers of visitors, we had to curb group trips throughout the year, which would ordinarily include:
  - nurture visits for children, young people and adults who experience additional disadvantage, exploring the role of costume as part of a project's process and gaining experiential access to culture and the arts
  - mentoring of school pupils and university students with drama or costume-based assignments

- **Costume-making resources:**
  - Sewing equipment and recycled fabrics to resource user groups' own costume-making projects and encourage sustainable practise.
  - Library collection: referencing historical dress of ordinary people; world and cultural dress; affordable, local costume resources.
- **Costume storage:**
  - Provision of a free shared storage facility for groups' own costumes, hence ensuring their costumes remain in use and that all groups benefit from the subsequently broadened range of costumes available to them from our store.

Through our Community Outreach Programme we reach further groups and individuals who experience disadvantage and isolation. This first year of the pandemic saw our hands-on outreach activities scaled back but it was also an opportunity to be inventive and find new ways of making a difference to the communities we work with, as detailed in 'Achievements and Performance'. In an ordinary year we would deliver the following:

- **Storytelling and Creative dress-up** designed to encourage a sense of play for children and families experiencing life challenges. Costume becomes the catalyst for the creation of characters, scenarios and social interaction, whereby children stretch their imaginations and live out their dreams and hopes.
- **Reminiscence and dress-up sessions** with older people who come together to be socially active, often as a means of combating social isolation. Our sessions contribute to their wellbeing with:
  - themed memory boxes and vintage dress-up sessions that ignite the meaningful sharing of past experiences
  - fancy dress photo-booths that encourage playful activity and a reminder of the sense of fun that can be had at any stage of life
- **Educational Workshops** for children with special educational and emotional needs, teaching practical sewing skills within a context of promoting emotional wellbeing and developing self-confidence.

We support a diverse community of volunteers, and despite Covid-19 we continued to provide opportunities for people with a range of learning and support needs, tailoring roles to their interests and aspirations. Where we could, we provided training and supported work placements within the organisation that maintained self-confidence or supported specific pathways into the creative arts industry and employment.

Trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include further statements, where relevant, about:

- policy on grantmaking;
- policy programme related investment;
- contribution made by volunteers.

- Environmental sustainability frames our aims and objectives, with the re-use of resources at the core of our ethos and the services we offer, as well as being integral to the communication of key organisational values. Our long-standing commitment to be part of the solution to a sustainable textile industry and our planet-friendly practices influence organisations and individuals and ensure that our own carbon footprint remains minimal.

  The 7,000 costumes we share with our local communities are predominantly comprised of donated recycled stock, some of which are further adapted by us for improved costume purpose. We encourage beneficiary groups to gift their un-used costumes to Gladrags and we store items for other groups, to re-share these within our communities. The costume-making support and recycled materials we offer groups further promotes sustainable costume practise.

  Our re-homing scheme, whereby we donate surplus costumes and artefacts, brings together our principles of minimal waste with opportunities to provide additional support to the charities, schools and community projects who benefit from the scheme.

- An ethos of wider participation and social inclusion is a key aspect to the delivery of and access to our services. We are committed to reaching community groups and individuals experiencing disadvantage and isolation and achieve this further through our own outreach projects.

- We actively recruit, support, and develop volunteers with wide-ranging skills and learning needs and celebrate the inclusivity of our team as an organisational asset.

Section D Achievements and performance

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

- **PROVISION OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES:**

  Gladrags reached 2,400 people, by supplying costumes and related resources to projects they participated in or attended. This was a significant decrease in numbers of 6,200 on the previous year, reflecting the impact on the arts, education and social gatherings due to Covid lockdown restrictions. That said, we celebrate the ways we were able to continually adapt our service in line with the changes to government guidelines and restrictions, to make it possible for schools and groups to access our resources when they became relevant again and were needed.

  From August 2020 onwards we remained open specifically for education and arts organisations only, operating safely with a skeleton team. We surmounted all the challenges facing us to resource and honour the resilience of teachers, community workers and Arts practitioners who, in the spirit of promoting positive mental health and wellbeing were finding inventive ways to:

  - provide exciting, interactive learning opportunities
  - devise and perform theatre; create and exhibit art
  - bring people together, remotely or face to face, to be socially active

❖ **COSTUME RESOURCES and PROVISION OF SERVICES:**

Summer of Hope

From July 2020 we began preparing to re-open for organisations in a covid-safe way, ensuring that they could loan costumes from us with confidence at a time when the concerns over virus transmission informed all practise. As some lockdown restrictions began to ease locally, we were ready by August to resource the determined local organisations staging outdoor and covid-safe performances and events, including:

- Wellbeing drama workshops for children and young people delivered by *Bigfoot Theatre*, *Young Actors Group* and *Windmill Youth Theatre*
- Zoom performance projects by *Four Tails Theatre*, *Kaleidescope* and *Different Theatre*
- Outdoor theatre by *Sarah Mann Productions* and *One Fell Swoop*. A highlight of a hopeful summer this latter project, *Shakespeare Unlocked*, saw actors rehearsing on zoom before staging six Shakespeare plays in a local park, spread across summer weekends. Selling out whatever the weather, all profits raised funding for *Fareshare Sussex*, the charity redistributing food industry surplus to the people that need it most.

This time was also an opportunity for local charities and not-for-profits to shine a spotlight on local and global issues in public, dressing in costume to raise their profile and draw attention to their causes. These included:

- *Lewes Foodbank*, encouraging supermarket shoppers to make food donations
- *Youth Climate Strike Brighton* and *Divest Sussex*, highlighting the climate crisis in ever-impactful ways

Supporting Schools

By September we were ready to resource schools and colleges again. Having consulted with a group of primary schools in July, we knew that many were planning innovative in-house enrichment activities to counter the lack of access to off-site arts, culture, and educational experiences for their pupils. Together we planned for an adapted offering of our services in September that acknowledged the additional challenges faced by teachers as well as covid-safety protocol both in schools and in the Gladrags store. As visitors to Gladrags were largely not able to access costumes and artefacts freely, this meant providing pre-packed, quarantined resource boxes. These still enabled teaching staff to offer interactive approaches to learning with artefacts and costume that:

- brought history to life for pupils learning about The Titanic at *Patcham Junior*, Ernest Shackleton at *Stanford Junior*, The Edwardians at *Coldean Primary*, The Vikings at *Moulsecoomb Primary*, Evacuees at *Hove Junior School*

- gave context to world cultures for children learning about: African art and jewellery at *Bevendean Primary*; West Africa with the *East Brighton Home Education Network*
- provided sensory learning experiences for students at special schools: *Woodland Mead, Cuckmere House* and *Downs View*

We discovered that teachers preferred these ready-made boxes to the 'free-assembly' approach we offered previously. Designed for ease and instant pick-up, these came into their own during the November lockdown when we operated a click & collect style service outdoors.

By Spring 2021 some colleges and universities were finding ways of staging assessed A-level and degree-level performances. From A-level Shakespeare set in a zoom film-noir world at *IC Theatre College* to studio-recorded Visual Arts degree shows inspired by vintage clothing at *Brighton University*, these projects put costume at their heart and depended on Gladrags to help meet the needs and aspirations of their students. With covid safety limiting access to our full collection and our usual DIY free-roaming service, our small volunteer team drew on in-house expertise to successfully style the projects themselves. As well as offering a practical solution, this approach provided rewarding, creative opportunities for our dedicated volunteers.

Service improvements

We maintained an ongoing core objective to adapt and develop our resources and services to suit the needs of different beneficiary groups. We made use of the quieter times to:

- reorganise and thin out our stock to ensure our collections remain relevant to the needs of our beneficiaries
- make improvements to storage and equipment in our sewing and repair workshop, boosting our capacity to restore, repair and adapt our costumes for re-use
- update and improve our 'customer-facing' procedures to provide a more efficient service
- create an initial visual library and inventory of resource boxes to promote them more effectively to schools and aid teachers in planning enrichment activities

A little joy at Christmas

Before restrictions could alter plans, our Father Christmas outfits helped to bring magic into children's worlds at *Each Peach Nursery, Bolney Primary School, Moulsecoomb Primary School, Ovingdean Little Theatre* and *Woodingdean Primary School.*

We styled and supported outdoor Christmas shows and tours for organisations who were able, against all pandemic odds, to maintain their passion and capability in bringing the Arts safely to communities in the South East: *Brighton Open Air Theatre, Frankly Speaking Productions* and *This is My Theatre.*

With determination and robust covid-safety practise we organised a pre-Christmas wellbeing event and treat for isolated older people living in Moulsecoomb and Bevendean, ensuring that a little Christmas magic reached them too. For many it was their only or main social event at Christmas, and as well as watching a free ballet performance, it was an opportunity to meet safely with friends and community neighbours at what is ordinarily a sociable and caring time.

Professional companies

Our organisational status as a charity meant that we were able to bring volunteers together safely within covid guidelines and afford ourselves lead-in time to prepare for re-opening. Our organisational challenges during the pandemic were different to those of costume houses being run as profit-making businesses. Consequently, we found ourselves to be the only local costume house open, increasing our online profile and drawing professional TV and Theatre companies to our door, in particular *RELSAH Productions*, a local independent film company shooting their new feature *Vindication Swim*, and for whom we styled 1920s outfits on a monthly basis. In addition, we were able to:

- provide costumes to *Chichester Festival Theatre, Passion Pictures, Channel 4, ITV, Second Act Productions* and *Conn Artists Theatre Company*
- demonstrate the authenticity of our vintage costume and overall high quality of our collections
- raise further funds from the higher fees paid by these companies, subsidising the low fees paid by beneficiaries

❖ **COMMUNITY OUTREACH:**

Our Outreach Programme began again cautiously in the summer of 2020 with covid-safe outdoor activities and focussed principally on reaching children, families and older people living in East Brighton and experiencing food poverty. In addition to being most local to Gladrags, the wards in this area fell this year within the 10% most deprived in the UK.

Family support and Storybox

Story-box draws on our extensive costume collection to create themes within which lively and interactive storytelling is framed. We partner with local organisations who support families living on low-income and experiencing disadvantage. These partnerships are founded on a joint aim to bring joy to local children and families who can rarely, if ever, afford to treat themselves.

Despite our usual shared dressing-up activities being unfeasible, in September 2020 we were able to take part in an outdoor pop-up family event with *CHOMP-Moulsecoomb.* the free holiday lunch project catering to

families who struggle on a daily basis to feed a whole family. This 'settling-in' event was aimed at children about to begin school and Gladrags was one of a series of interactive activities for family bubbles to take part in, alongside a lunch, and food-support boxes to take home.

As part of this initiative, and to provide a covid-safe activity, each family bubble selected individual costume accessories to take part in *Storybox*, which were then gifted to them.

In addition, we committed to supporting *CHOMP-Moulsecoomb* with regular volunteer support once they would be able to start full interactive activities again.

Reaching older people and Reminiscence

Building on the success of our *Memories Matter* project (reminiscence-based sessions designed to spark the sharing of past experiences), we adapted to Covid times with a new project, *Chatterboxes*. Partnering with *The Bevy Community Pub* in Moulsecoomb, we supported their lunch club for older people experiencing isolation, including those living with dementia and Alzheimer's. Emerging from shielding was in itself a huge step for people who had been living alone, many without family support nearby. In acknowledgement of this we had maintained contact through lockdown via phone calls and doorstep visits.

With a focus on fostering positive mental health and wellbeing, these sessions helped to rebuild social interaction amongst the group, whilst providing them with a much-need hearty lunch. Our reminiscence and nature boxes helped them to reconnect to the outside world and re-engage with sharing memories of happier times.

Sharing equally their experiences of lockdown and comparing these with past comparable experience (living through WW2 as children for example) inspired us to document and preserve some of their stories. These fed into a wider lockdown community project *Covid-19 Stories* (see below).

With the festive season of 2020 set to be a particularly isolating time, we arranged a free, covid-safe, pre-Christmas event at *St Andrew's Church* in Moulsecoomb, for a wider community of people living in isolation. Local professional ballet company *Frankly Speaking Productions* enchanted our guests with *The Snow Queen*. Many had never been to the Theatre or Ballet before and the experience was referred to time and again at further *Chatterbox* lunches, with some guests expressing that it was the highlight of their otherwise quiet Christmas.

Sew-Easy workshops

We did not run a programme this year due to the challenges of delivering these activities on a covid-safe way.

Lockdown projects

Whilst closed to the public until August 2020, and to volunteers until July, we devised two projects to engage local people and our volunteers during lockdown, creating resources to be subsequently shared within our community.

Covid-19 Stories Project

We were determined to find ways to stay connected with our beneficiaries meaningfully and remotely, despite being unable to hire costumes and artefacts. During the first lockdown we found that beneficiaries we were in touch with were instinctively sharing their experiences with us. Gladrags is full of the stories that accompany the clothes donated to us and some of these accounts we already curate. As a natural progression, we began to document these lockdown stories and invite people to write their own.

Reaching far across our community, we were able to capture this significant moment of living history, providing an outlet for the participants, and ultimately producing a free resource for teachers and community / youth workers processing the events of Covid-19 within their schools, community projects and well-being settings.

Between May and September 2020, people of all ages described their lives at home, work and school and shared their feelings, challenges, and hopes. We provided a student placement in illustration and our talented volunteer worked remotely to convey the essence of stories in visual form. By September we were able to share a collection of 30 stories with schools and community groups across Sussex. These accounts ranged from those of key workers such as: a teacher; a supermarket cashier; a GP; a member of the swabbing team; and personal accounts such as: elderly people shielding; children and young people adjusting; a new mum; a daughter's wedding; people experiencing lockdown in other countries.

Community Lockdown Bunting Project

Partnering with local not-for-profit organisation *Sew Fabulous* we reached out to volunteers from both our organisations and to local people, offering a creative, hopeful activity that they could do easily from home. Across our city and beyond this project saw people of all ages putting their fabric scraps and worn-out clothes to good use, by creating single bunting flags; some sewers working in detail on a handful, others making over a hundred. Ultimately these were brought together into themed bunting lines and shared freely within our communities.

Over half of those taking part were living alone over lockdown and told us how meaningful it was for them to feel included in a creative, fun, and purposeful project, where they knew their efforts would also later benefit their community.

In September we were able to safely gather 12 bunting makers together for a celebration and to assemble the flags into themed reams. This produced 200m of bunting ready to be loaned for free to community events once restrictions had eased enough in 2021 for these events to happen again.

Supporting front-line work

We know that our volunteers give their time because they care about their community, and they want to be purposeful. Four volunteers had begun independently joining local schemes to make scrubs for the NHS. Others were keen to be involved but needed support to achieve this. We pooled together information and resources to involve as many volunteers as possible, taking into consideration their range of skills. In this way we contributed together with greater impact by:

- supporting each other to sew scrubs and masks and knit mask-holders for local hospital staff and community nurses
- sewing masks for homeless people accessing services from *Open Door* in Lewes and families on low-income accessing support from the *Lewes Food Hub*

We reassessed our stock priorities and decided to slim down our collection of authentic medical uniform and donate 70% of our scrubs to the NHS. Similarly, we gave away men's modern clothing and coats to *Open Door* and collected 25 blankets and towels from our Gladrags community for this small, under-resourced charity.

❖ **RECYCLING AND RE-PURPOSING:**

Re-homing scheme

This scheme prompts us to assess the relevance and usage of our existing costume collections, and to pass on items donated to Gladrags that are more suited to other projects. In line with increased societal awareness about recycling, re-use and reducing waste, we received a vastly increased number of donations, as people benefited from lockdown to sort and clear un-used items from their homes. As well as adding choice pieces to our hire collections, post-lockdown we were able to share these donations amongst a small number of active community groups, charities, and schools with outdoor pick-up points. In addition we continued to give practical clothing to charities working with homeless people and refugees. With many community activities on hold, we prepared for promoting the scheme again in May 2021.

Having begun to build a network of schools and community providers in 2019, we found organisations being signposted to us, meaning that we could respond to specific requests such as the following:

- A community practitioner working with people in advanced stages of dementia and Alzheimer's. We gifted 50 different fabric scarves which she requested as multi-use items for sensory activities, hairstyling, dancing and art.
- Scrapspace in Shoreham, requesting bulk fabric and textile scrap for re-use in community and education settings across West Sussex. Taking the opportunity to thin out our own textile collection, we gifted two carloads of scrap fabric; haberdashery; damaged clothing, costumes, wigs and hats; two sewing machines.

Vintage Sales

The selling of our vintage stock is a means of repurposing sellable items and dress fabrics less relevant to the beneficiary groups accessing our re-homing scheme. It also means that we:

- align our circular fashion ethos by using the re-sale of clothing to fund our mission, serving beneficiary groups in Sussex
- promote the purchase of second-hand clothing and are actively part of the solution to textile waste

With lockdowns freezing all our other sources of revenue, and sales events cancelled, our online sales became an essential fundraising tool. Our focus turned to sales via eBay and to a reframing of our costume collections' purpose in terms of serving our beneficiaries in the best way possible. This led us to:

- release high value, desirable vintage garments from the costume collection for sale and to fund our mission
- invite our Gladrags community to donate vintage / retro clothing to us for sale purposes specifically
- access high-level training via eBay to improve the functionality of our eBay shop, raise our profile and increase sales
- launch the sale of fabrics and patterns, made possible by a significant donation of designer deadstock upholstery fabric

With clothing and fabric shops closed and the quieter, less polluted environment bringing the climate crisis more sharply into people's consciousness, the response to our eBay shop was overwhelmingly positive and enabled us to:

- reach new audiences seeking to reduce their personal impact on textile waste and opt out of 'purchasing new'
- reach audiences searching for affordable retro styles and quality fabrics
- depend on a growing revenue stream, with a value 300% greater than the previous year that we split between funding our school resource box scheme and channelling back into our re-homing and recycling activities

In early December we held a bookable, covid-safe Christmas Market involving local makers as well as the sale our vintage clothes and fabric. Our invitation to customers to shop local, support independent makers and reduce their carbon footprint reaped dividends: by galvanising our growing network of local sewing groups and vintage buyers as well as friends and supporters of Gladrags, we raised £2000.

❖ **VOLUNTEERS:**

Wellbeing

This year highlighted both how essential our volunteer team is to ensuring that Gladrags can meet the needs of its beneficiaries and equally how crucial our careful thought and attention to them is: for most, volunteering with Gladrags fulfils a personal need, be it social interaction with others, gaining new skills or sharing existing ones, building confidence and self-esteem, learning how to orient being in a workplace, contact with vintage costume and being immersed in a creative environment.

We place high importance on a sense of belonging and community and our first priority in lockdown was to attend to volunteer wellbeing. We did this by ensuring that volunteers:

- felt heard and supported, receiving weekly phone calls from the Volunteer Coordinator or Director; with 8 volunteers living alone, 3 living in supported housing and 4 experiencing mental health challenges, providing a listening ear became ever more pertinent and further practical support was offered where it was needed.

- could connect meaningfully with other volunteers and be socially engaged via our weekly zoom gatherings, where stories, memories, creative ideas and laughter were shared; for those shielding it became a weekly highpoint.

- adapting volunteer roles to enable remote-working as well as opportunities to tap into new skill areas or develop new interests. We prepared and delivered individual sewing repair and costume construction projects to volunteers, set up inventory work and historical research, and created 2 new opportunities in illustration and administration.

Thanks to this, coupled with the dedication of our team, 90% of our volunteers continued to give their time remotely, or face to face once a phased return to work was in process.

Team:

Over the course of the year, 29 volunteers helped us to maintain our resources, deliver activities and serve our beneficiaries. We welcomed 4 new volunteers to the team, which compares with 45 in the previous year. This was due to the challenges of volunteer recruitment during a pandemic and the fact that we needed to focus on guaranteeing volunteer opportunities for our existing team within the framework of our reduced activity and covid-safety measures.

Upon re-opening to the public in August 2020, we operated on a reduced schedule, with a skeleton team, inviting back volunteers who were least at risk in terms of contracting covid and eventually building up the team in accordance with the changing restrictions and individual volunteers' readiness to come back to work. This included 10 young people 20yrs and under who were the foundation of our team in the first two months of

opening, some instrumental in helping us to make our store covid-safe and ready for the rest of the team. Most other workers and volunteers were supported to work from home, until schools re-opened in March 2021.

Progression:

For some, volunteering at Gladrags is a stepping-stone on professional or personal journeys, bolstering portfolios and fostering self-confidence. We maintained our commitment to supporting this with tailored opportunities and since working with us in 2020-21:

- 2 volunteers began college studies in costume and art; one began a degree in film studies
- 2 volunteers boosted their portfolios to support their career paths in illustration and one gained the confidence they had hoped for to step back into the world of work

Engagement:

For others still their contribution to Gladrags is an integral part of their life, and by March 2021, 10 volunteers in our team had been with us for over five years. We are proud of maintaining such a strong and experienced team and it is in times of crisis that this bedrock of our charity comes into its own – a solid core creating a safe and welcoming environment for new volunteers to come into the fold. Engagement this year took the form of:

- pro-active facilitation of private volunteer forums (Facebook, WhatsApp and the online *Bunting Group*)
- identifying projects, areas of interest or online study and training opportunities to signpost volunteers to
- an NHS *Scrubs and Masks* scheme. Whilst some volunteers used their own initiative to join schemes, we pooled together information, facilitated access to schemes and brought volunteers together via zoom and social media groups to share tips, ideas and patterns, giving others the confidence to take part, so that nearly half the team sewed for the NHS.
- Our *Lockdown Bunting Project* which, whilst accessible to a wider community, put our volunteers at its centre – for some, our Bunting Day in September was their first outing since lockdown and an opportunity to reconnect with others in the team.

❖ INCOME GENERATION

Our previously resilient model of income generation via services works by linking costume hire fees directly to our resource provision: beneficiaries contribute at a very minimal level in order to loan costumes and resource boxes affordably; this service is then subsidised by the top-rate fees paid by standard customers.

Section D Achievements and performance

With school closures and low activity levels in the Arts, our model was tested this year. However, having steadily over previous years channelled a growing percentage of this hire income into unrestricted reserves, we were able to ride the initial uncertainty of the financial year ahead. This principle of building free reserves has always been key to our organisational sustainability, ensuring that we are able to maintain our service and support our team in the immediate and long-term, and address crisis situations. For the first time in our history, we depended on it almost entirely for the first quarter and acknowledged the strength it gave our organisation more than ever. It ensured that we could:

- guarantee work and payment of fees for all our committed self-employed workers, who all, bar one, were not able to access the government's *Self Employment Support Scheme*
- cover our essential building, rental and maintenance costs

In addition, throwing all our energy behind our growing Vintage Sales income stream reaped dividends, raising over £9000 unrestricted income across the year, compared with £3,000 in the previous year.

Income from grants and significant donors are equally crucial to our capacity to deliver services and activities to our beneficiaries. We began the year with just one grant, and minimal prospects due to most funders awarding crisis-funding only. By June we had received a business covid support grant and Trust funding for our lockdown projects. Significantly filling the funding gap, the covid support grant made it possible for us to plan the re-opening of our store and meeting the needs of our beneficiaries again from August 2020.

Section E Financial review

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

The charity aims to hold at least £8000 in reserve to guarantee necessary immediate and short-term core expenditure in the subsequent quarter. £1250 is set as an ongoing bare minimum reserve amount to cover potential troughs in the cash budget.

Section G Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)	H Butler.	
Full name(s)	HEATHER BUTLER	
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	CHAIR	

Date 27.1.2022

GLADRAGS COMMUNITY COSTUME TRUST
(CHARITY NUMBER 1122704)

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF GLADRAGS COMMUNITY COSTUME TRUST FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 March 2021.

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011("the Act").

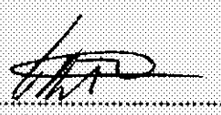
I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in any material respect:

(i). accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or

(ii). the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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



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Date 27th January 2022