

Trustees' annual report

Period start date 31/08/2020

Period end date 01/09/2021

MusicLinks **Charity No: 1130710**

Objectives and Activities

MusicLinks works to educate the public in the art of music. We assist disadvantaged people and communities by responding to the needs of those living at risk of isolation and/or living in rural areas, primarily those living with disabilities.

Activities undertaken in relation to those purposes

In the pursuit of our charitable purposes in the last year we have continued to deliver music education workshops, which are free at the point of access in disadvantaged areas. We've worked extensively with special schools, day care centers and the bedbound, supporting those with learning difficulties in South Lakeland, Eden, Barrow and Carlisle. In the period covered by this report, we have delivered exclusively in Cumbria, although we remain open to working further afield as and when the need may arise.

MusicLinks main activities for the public benefit, in particular the projects or services identified in the accounts

In order to support our charitable purposes, the Chief Executive Officer and team have drawn down funding from a variety of local and national trusts and foundations to fund further development and delivery of the Interactive Ensembles (IE aka Magic Notes) music education project. The project was devised in order to meet the needs created by the lockdowns and has subsequently proved a great success.

The project also delivered a community-music workshop programme featuring high quality guest artists via Zoom and Microsoft Teams providing a practical alternative to our flagship project JamTent. JamTent is due to return in 2023 offering a large-scale celebratory event at the end of July next year. In 2022 JamTent will instead be broadcast/live-linked for the first time from Kendal Calling Music Festival - The new approach is in direct response to concerns/risks flagged up by partners and carers relating to the lingering effects of COVID on their service users. Over the last two years the groups we work with have experienced staff/budget cutbacks, a reduction in volunteers, and their vulnerable participants, who are also more susceptible to viruses, are now more nervous about mingling with large-crowds.

In delivering our work for the public benefit, in line with our purposes, we have paid the CEO/Lead Musician for project development/delivery, fundraising and general management tasks. We have spent the largest part of our budget on project costs i.e. engaging the services of Music Leaders, local and world-class music artists, and bands. We have also procured iPads and a variety of instruments for distribution to disadvantaged groups so they can participate in the project. Our fuel costs and volunteer related costs have had a reduced impact on the budget this year due to our work being carried more often online.

In August 21, as agreed, our CEO traveled to London to meet with journalists to discuss publicity for the project and a possible link up with Google. As usual the costs of servicing the van used for transporting gear to workshops have been partially covered by the charity. In order to ensure the safety of our beneficiaries we have carried out risk assessments in order to identify any risks of harm. We have delivered workshops mainly online but where indoor workshops were permissible we adhered to COVID guidance including sanitising and quarantining all instruments for 48 hours prior to workshops in buildings that regularly cater for vulnerable service users.

Trustees Statement

We the Trustees of MusicLinks confirm that we are aware of and have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. We are aware that this is a Legal requirement in line with the Charities Act when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant. As such we have taken it into account when making decisions to which the guidance is relevant and have not decided to depart from the guidance, unless we have had good reasons for doing so.

Contribution made by Volunteers

Once again this year, we have benefitted from the support of volunteers, whose contribution has been of great value and significance to the charity's ability to undertake our work. Our volunteers are recruited either by word of mouth or recommendation. As in previous years, volunteers were not paid for their time but were paid for any out-of-pocket expenses including: travel, postage and telephone costs if working from home, essential equipment, such as PPE and reimbursed for refreshments.

Achievements and Performance

MusicLinks main achievement throughout the period of this report has been the continued delivery of a unique music education workshop programme for vulnerable people in Cumbria. This year the Interactive Ensembles (IE) project was introduced to participants from across South Cumbria and engaged the skills of a wide range of music artists. Vulnerable people with disabilities who attend local special schools and daycare centers along with those living in hospices, or cared for at home, were offered the chance to listen to, take part in Q&A sessions with, and jam along to artists from across the UK and beyond, in the process contributing to a groundbreaking new online music improvisation resource. We also increased the music skills of participants along with increasing opportunities for marginalized community members to integrate positively with mainstream society both in person and online, during a potentially isolating time. IE provided a wonderful opportunity for our service users to integrate with the wider community. Along with the successful project delivery, we must give credit to the designers and code writers associated with the project which has subsequently been granted a patent by the UK Intellectual Property Office. In light of the success of the project, MusicLinks continues to fulfill its primary objective, to educate the public in the art of music even as we have been forced to operate mainly online during the reporting period. In doing so we have continued to break down social barriers and challenge any preconceptions that may be held by wider society when considering the plight of those with disabilities.

MusicLinks financial position at the end of the period and Reserves Policy

As with previous years our finances are built around the delivery of projects in the spring and summer, reviewing and reporting in the autumn and then fundraising in winter into spring. During the winter/spring period remaining funds are used to ensure the administration and fundraising team can continue working effectively in order to raise funds for and deliver the spring /summer programme. Due to the fact that we are not a 'regularly funded' organisation we continue to rely on project-by-project funding via trusts and foundations. Therefore we continue to operate a no reserves policy. Although we acknowledge the financial risk from the possibility of unforeseen expenditure, a shortfall in income, or an inability to control costs, we continue to operate this way and have therefore worked in recent years to ensure that our administrative costs are kept as low as possible and at a sustainable level. Since 2012 when we moved out of our offices at Stricklandgate House, we've employed people on a purely freelance/sessional basis, improved our levels of voluntary support and mainly run the charity from home. Apart from the storage facility we rent on a monthly basis in Witherslack and the occasional on-costs relating to electricity, heating, phone/internet and travel costs, we have reduced our administration costs significantly (by around 80%) in the last ten years, in order to reduce risk and ensure the overall resilience and sustainability of the charity. However, it remains a responsibility of the administration and trustees to continue to research and develop ways to:

- implement a sustainable reserves policy
- raise the necessary funds to generate reserves at around 12% annually
- diversify our funding base
- mitigate the risks that might arise if the charity has to close suddenly

During this reporting period we have drawn down funding support from a variety of Trusts and Foundations.

All related expenditure/funding outlined above was drawn down in order to support the Interactive Ensembles project, related administrative costs and to enable the overall development of our charitable work.

Finances

MusicLinks Limited - Statement of Accounts (1/09/20 – 31/8/21)

INCOME

Opening Capital		£10,773.47
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INCOME	
	Received

Arts Council Lottery	16,963.00
Cumbria Community Foundation	1,500.00
Frieda Scott Foundation	3,200.00
Performing Rights Society Foundation	2,400.00
Hadfield Trust	3,400.00
Donations	0.00
Lakeland Disability	0.00

TOTAL INCOME		27,463.00
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EXPENDITURE

EXPENDITURE	
	Spent
Admin	678.45
CEO - Lead Musician	9,190.00
Vehicle Costs and Fuel	1,535.66
Volunteers and Travel Expenses	2,094.09
Office	4,199.86
Project & event costs / Sundries	7,190.59
Miscellaneous	160.51
Equipment & instruments	6,005.23
Refunds and Adjustments	4,086.51
TOTAL SPENT	31,054.39
CLOSING BALANCE	11,268.59

Audit Exemption Statement

For the year ending 31/08/2021 The company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies Directors' responsibilities.

. Trustees have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question under section 476

. Directors acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts

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

Ratified by Company Director: Trevor Avery

23/05/2022

Structure, Governance and Management

MusicLinks continues to operate as a limited company in accordance with the procedures outlined in our: MEMORANDUM AND ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED 17 FEBRUARY 2009 AS AMENDED BY SPECIAL RESOLUTION 25 JUNE 2009

Reference and Administrative details

Charity name: MusicLinks Limited

AKA: MusicLinks

Registered charity number: 1130710

Charity's principal address: Woodside, Garth Row, Underbarrow, Kendal, Cumbria, LA88AY

Trustee name:

1 Andrew McKay (Director ML Limited)

2 Trevor Avery (Director ML Limited)

3 Stuart Downs

4 Keith Redfern

5 Andrew Deakin

6 James Darrington

7 Anthony Wallis

Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee:

All Trustees are consulted when appointing new Trustees, but if all are unavailable then it falls to the Directors of MusicLinks Limited and the Chief Executive Officer.

Chief Executive Officer: Andrew Halsey

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of MusicLinks ('the Company')

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 August 2021.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities [applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)].

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



Joel Williams
1 Montrose Avenue
Stretford
Manchester
M32 9LN

08th June 2022