

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER:1158370

**THE DIDSBURY ARTS FESTIVAL CIO
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND
UNAUDITED INCOME & EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR
ENDED 31ST OCTOBER 2024**

THE DIDSBURY ARTS FESTIVAL CIO

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2024**

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The Didsbury Arts Festival

Report of the Trustees

Didsbury Arts Festival is one of Manchester's largest contemporary community arts charities. Our biennial festival, celebrated for the breadth and diversity of its programme, showcases both aspiring and established artists known locally, nationally and internationally.

The first post-pandemic festival held in July 2023 was the biggest and best yet. 10,000 visitors enjoyed 220 different events featuring some 600 artists. Not afraid to challenge our audiences or take creative risks we also sought to constantly maximise engagement and participation with the programme offering something for everyone.

Over nine days there were: 41 music events including pop, rock, folk, classical, jazz and choral; 29 visual arts exhibitions; 1 film showcase; 10 literature; 8 theatre and dance events; 24 interactive workshops; 3 guided walks and 14 family friendly events. 65% were free to attend and 80% of tickets were purchased by people from outside Didsbury.

Arts Council England support enabled us to present Flight by Darkfield, an immersive theatre experience in a shipping container positioned outside Didsbury Library. One of the highlights of the festival and one of our most visited attractions, it epitomised our reputation for welcoming international producers and hosting daring projects. It also demonstrated the appetite among festival goers to experience something completely unique. The programme achieved high quality press coverage from across the region and social media with 46,000 pageviews during the festival.

Founded in 2009, the charity's stated purpose is to make the arts more accessible and meaningful to more people living and working in Didsbury and its surrounding neighbourhoods of Burnage, Old Moat and Withington, no matter their age, ability, background or financial means. Reflecting on the success of the most recent festival following the hiatus of the pandemic, the charity was also conscious that we operate in a different world today. The macro-economic and social conditions have changed in the intervening years, society is more divided, and people and communities face different and increasing challenges. The power of the arts however has never been more needed to address isolation, improve health and wellbeing, tackle inequalities and bring people and communities together. So, it's vital we remain relevant to the audiences we exist to serve.

There is also a changing landscape for the sector and a movement linking arts and wellbeing more tightly. Studies show the benefits of creativity to health, and therefore the impact when people lack access.

Studies by Arts Council England show that “those who had attended a cultural place or event in the previous 12 months were almost 60 per cent more likely to report good health compared to those who had not.”

However, according to the Local Government Association (LGA), arts funding has declined by £2.3bn since 2010. The Cultural Learning Alliance has highlighted the impact this has on children, especially those living in more deprived households, stating:

“...where a child grows up, and their family’s socioeconomic status, are significant social determinants in whether or not they will pursue expressive arts options from the age of 14.”

In 2024, our refreshed board of trustees supported financially by long-term sponsors ABA, commissioned a specialist consultation, to uncover what community groups and the public want from the festival in the future, and to further understand the local impact the arts can have.

Focussed on scoping potential local community partners, targeted relationship building and public engagement, Get It Done Arts worked with the DAF trustees to steer profile raising public interactions at local events, convene a steering group, develop and host creative workshops with community groups and host an online community consultation.

There was also plentiful input on the nature of the festival, significantly in favour of live music, theatre, immersive installations, art exhibitions and events bringing colour, food and hands-on activities for all. ‘Family-friendly’ experiences and opportunities to ‘make’ were also flagged along with interest in literature, dance and performance activities.

A clear priority was showcasing local artists. Common themes included increasing diversity and representation, creating an inclusive atmosphere, improving physical accessibility, and offering low-cost events. However, many respondents said they weren’t aware of the festival and its programming, highlighting the need for improved promotion and clearer information.

The insights from the consultation confirmed the continued relevance of our charity’s objectives and the value of the legacy we have created. They also highlighted the importance of being more inclusive, to strengthen our community relations, and grow the social impact the charity has in the local area, including its more disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

The board has used the insights from this engagement to develop a new revitalised vision and an ambitious plan to deepen community relations and the social impact the charity has.

“Make the arts accessible to people living and working in Didsbury, Burnage, Old Moat and Withington, no matter their age, ability, background or financial means.”

The consultation informed and deepened our values for the future: Community, Fairness, Inclusive, Diverse, Creative, Partnership underscoring our belief that the charity can play an important role in addressing issues of poverty and inequality, using art to improve inclusivity and individual prospects. From 2024 greater focus will be placed on funding arts and theatre projects for the most disadvantaged children in our locality. We will do this through a network of schools where there is a high proportion of Pupil Premium students (those receiving additional funding to help close the attainment gap) and we will work with specialist providers, performers and artists who reflect our values, to reach this goal.

It was therefore agreed that the next festival will take place in July 2026 to allow sufficient time and energy to implement the plan, further strengthen the board of trustees and build new relationships with more community partners. The theme for this festival will be 'Visibility and Invisibility', combining the power of the imagination with the right to be seen, foregrounding life experiences often overlooked, as well as considering the impact of the arts we can't see, like sound and music.

This exciting theme will be expressed through everything we do, from our international programming to our work with local artists, charities and community partners. It will be geared to inspiring new art lovers and makers of all ages. And crucially, it will provide a platform for highlighting inequality and provoking change.

We will stay true to our roots of bringing a daring programme of arts to Didsbury and around but will go further to play an important role in addressing the impact of poverty and inequality, by using the arts to build community cohesion and improve individual prospects.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number

1158370

The Didsbury Arts Festival

Report of the Trustees

for the Year Ended 31 October 2024

Principal address

6 Grange Lane

Manchester

M20 6RW

Trustees

Mr N Mackenzie

Mrs L Gower

Mrs H Mahaputra

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 29TH August 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'N. Mackenzie', followed by a comma.

The Didsbury Arts Festival

1158370

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Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from

Period start date
01/11/2023

To

Period end date
31/10/2024


Section A Receipts and payments

| | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Endowment funds | Total funds | Last year |
|---|--------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | to the nearest £ | to the nearest £ | to the nearest £ | to the nearest £ | to the nearest £ |
| A1 Receipts | | | | | |
| Fundraising | 39 | - | - | 39 | - |
| Grants | - | 5,200 | - | 5,200 | - |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| Sub total (Gross income for AR) | 39 | 5,200 | - | 5,239 | - |
| A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table). | | | | | |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| Sub total | - | - | - | - | - |
| Total receipts | 39 | 5,200 | - | 5,239 | - |
| A3 Payments | | | | | |
| Bank Charges | 60 | - | - | 60 | - |
| Website Charges | 131 | - | - | 131 | - |
| Purchases | 1,673 | - | - | 1,673 | - |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| Sub total | 1,864 | - | - | 1,864 | - |
| A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table) | | | | | |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| Sub total | - | - | - | - | - |
| Total payments | 1,864 | - | - | 1,864 | - |
| Net of receipts/(payments) | - 1,825 | 5,200 | - | 3,375 | - |
| A5 Transfers between funds | - | - | - | - | - |
| A6 Cash funds last year end | 3,136 | - | - | 3,136 | - |
| Cash funds this year end | 1,312 | 5,200 | - | 6,512 | - |

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

| Categories | Details | Unrestricted funds to nearest £ | Restricted funds to nearest £ | Endowment funds to nearest £ |
|---|--|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| B1 Cash funds | Cash at bank | 1,312 | 5,200 | - |
| | | - | - | - |
| | | - | - | - |
| | Total cash funds | 1,312 | 5,200 | - |
| | (agree balances with receipts and payments account(s)) | OK | OK | OK |
| B2 Other monetary assets | | - | - | - |
| | | - | - | - |
| | | - | - | - |
| | | - | - | - |
| | | - | - | - |
| | | - | - | - |
| | | - | - | - |
| B3 Investment assets | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |
| B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |
| B5 Liabilities | | | - | |
| | | | - | |
| | | | - | |
| | | | - | |
| | | | - | |

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

| Signature | Print Name | Date of approval |
|---|----------------|------------------|
|  | Neil Mackenzie | 29/08/2025 |
| | | |