

APPLAUSE RURAL TOURING

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

Charity number 1165632



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Applause Rural Touring

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2024



The trustees are pleased to present their report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the charity's constitution, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015).

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

Charity registration number: 1165632

Principal address: Southborough Civic Centre, 137 London Road, Southborough,
Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 0NA

Director: Dawn Badland

Bankers: CAF Bank Limited, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling,
Kent, ME19 4JQ

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The charity is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) governed by its constitution dated 27 January 2016. The charity was registered with the Charity Commission on 18 February 2016.

The charity is governed by the board of trustees. The board meets quarterly (and more often if required) and decides on the strategic direction the charity should take, the performance targets that should be set and examines the recent activities and performance of the charity. The day to day operations of the charity are delegated to the Director.

Recruitment & appointment of trustees

Trustees are recruited in conjunction with ongoing needs and skills analysis to provide balanced and informed Governance for the Charity. No more than 12 and no less than 3 persons may be elected. Appointments are agreed by the Trustees for a fixed term after which Trustees may be re-elected.

Risk management

The Trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error. The Trustees meet on a quarterly basis and assess any risks to the Charity including monitoring of the Risk Register, the content of which is informed by consultation with staff, Board and stakeholders.

Applause Rural Touring

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2024



Trustees

The trustees who served during the year and to the date of this report were:

Nigel Bolton (resigned 12 December 2023)
Amanda Cusimano (appointed 18 June 2024)
Hannah Deeble (resigned 12 December 2023)
Helen Graves (resigned 12 September 2023)
Daniel King
Louise Knight
Elizabeth Newall (appointed 12 September 2023)
Elizabeth Pencavel (appointed 12 September 2023)
Louise Searle (appointed 10 September 2024)
Kat Portman Smith

OBJECT AND ACTIVITIES

The object of Applause Rural Touring as set out in its constitution is:

The advancement of arts to the benefit of the general public in rural and/or isolated communities in the South East of England by, in particular but not exclusively, programming, commissioning and facilitating delivery of artistic experiences; working with artists to help develop their understanding of, and work for, these communities; and by extending the reach of arts provision by developing local venues and supporting and training volunteer organisers. Isolated in this context means isolated from arts provision by physical, social or economic reasons.

Public benefit

The trustees have complied with the duty in section 4 of the 2011 Charities Act to have due regard to guidance published by the Charity Commission, including public benefit guidance. We have referred to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and in planning our future activities.

The charity furthers its charitable purposes for the public benefit by: opening up artistic opportunities to rural communities in Kent and Sussex and working with high quality cultural practitioners to develop and champion their work in rural areas.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Our work creates opportunities for rural and culturally under-served neighbourhoods to be empowered to reimagine their community through creative engagement. From halls to pubs to libraries, from fetes and festivals to village greens and to wide open spaces. We connect exceptional artists and performers with a network of passionate volunteers and programmers. Our work with artists and performers helps connect the dots to tour performance as well as develop new creations that empower people to reimagine where they live.

Communities are at the heart of everything we do and being far flung from a building for culture shouldn't be a barrier to experiencing it. Our work offers the opportunity to bring people together for inspiring, shared experiences celebrating the positive impacts culture has for a community. Through our touring programmes we reach over 140 communities, 35,000 audience members and more than 500 volunteers for culture each year.

We operate 3 key delivery routes, these are – to support and create excellent artistic and creative opportunity. To increase participation & engagement opportunities for rural communities and to create a rural touring model which is resilient and sustainable.

Applause Rural Touring

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2024



Increase participation & engagement opportunities for rural communities

2023-24 was year 1 of our new Arts Council England NPO phase (2023-2026) and we were delighted to receive a 120% uplift in ACE funding to support the county of Essex as a new delivery area and a range of Community Co-creation work in specific priority areas.

We achieved a good proportion of our targets with 57 indoor performance bookings and 78 outdoor performance bookings made. We created additional staffing capacity for Essex which began to see an increase of activity in that area. Our ReKindle partnership programme with a range of Medway libraries became fully embedded, continuing to grow with a range of free access work in partnership with Medway libraries. As part of this we commissioned The Library at the Edge of the World by Touched Theatre, a magical pop-up interactive show and writing experience for young audiences of all backgrounds that celebrates the power of stories to reconnect us to the world around us. We reached 32,656 audience members across 100 unique venues with 87 unique hosts across our programmes.

Support and create excellent artistic and creative opportunity

We held a well-attended artists' Lab in partnership with 101 Creation space in Reading which took the form of a 1 Day symposium for artists and producers interested in creating and touring small scale work outdoors.

Alongside re-touring some previously commissioned work, 9 companies were selected to receive support for reshapes and commissions to tour outdoor work in 2024. Two of these companies are supported in partnership with 1 Degree East. Never a Gull Moment by Feasible Ferret Theatre, Emoto-matic by Four Eyed Theatre, Arcade Mini by Casson & Friends, Doris Drake and Daria the Dragon by Rust and Stardust, The Ukulele Apothecary by Karina Garnett, Cracking the Crinoline by Moving Memory Dance Theatre, Memories with Connor by Connor Turansky and Puppet Petting Farm by Handmade Theatre.

Create a rural touring model which is resilient and sustainable

Applause moved office spaces in April 2023 which transformed staff wellbeing and effective working due to the vast improvement of the working environment. We developed a programme of delivery in partnership with Southborough Town Council within the building and our Director chaired the wider area Arts Council Cultural Compact, Creative Tunbridge Wells in partnership with numerous councils and creative and cultural organisations. We have further developed our board of Trustees.

Applause Rural Touring

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2024



FINANCIAL REVIEW

The income of the charity amounted to £454,808 (2023: £294,159) with expenditure of £423,389 (2023: £445,214).

Reserves policy

The policy of the charity as at 31 March 2024 was to have free reserves of five months' operating costs to fund its work (currently budgeted at £94,410). Unrestricted reserves at 31 March 2024 were £300,537 (2023: £246,184) of which £94,410 (2023: £87,015) has been designated by the trustees to set aside the free reserves of five months' operating costs with a further £88,039 (2023: £88,039) designated for development of activity in Essex and driving a new outdoor touring model for future inclusivity and sustainability. As at 31 March 2024 the assets of the charity are considered adequate to fulfil its obligations and the trustees consider the state of our financial affairs to be satisfactory.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Our newly drafted Sustainability policy and re-drafted Equality Diversity and Inclusion policy will both be worked up over the coming year.

We have a draft 2024-2027 business plan which outlines the development opportunities we are experiencing in an accelerating take up of our programme across all the areas within which we work. Our initial numbers for 2024-25 have already exceeded our targets and so we must plan for further growth in our rural touring activity. This includes leading on a national performance work commissioning programming for which we have submitted a 17 partner strong application to ACE project funds. We will also focus on developing our work through local partnerships for delivery within our building and our Community Co-Creation programme, supporting community volunteers and artists to work together forging shared cultural ambition and creative leadership.

TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The charity trustees are responsible for preparing a trustees' annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

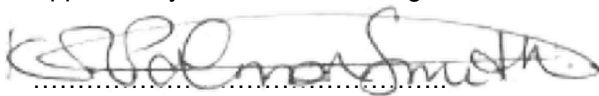
The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, of the charity for that period. In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are required to:

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

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the applicable Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations, and the provisions of the constitution. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included on the charity's website in accordance with legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements.

Approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by



Kat Portman Smith
Trustee
4 December 2024

Applause Rural Touring

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2024



	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £
Note						
INCOME:						
Grants and donations	325,647	54,487	380,134	196,320	-	196,320
Touring programme income	64,993	7,263	72,256	80,127	16,740	96,867
Bank interest	2,418	-	2,418	972	-	972
TOTAL INCOME	393,058	61,750	454,808	277,419	16,740	294,159
EXPENDITURE:						
Touring programme artists' fees	102,348	17,500	119,848	113,915	36,782	150,697
Artist development	32,020	8,000	40,020	30,670	24,022	54,692
Audience development & marketing	8,942	13,551	22,493	7,184	28,067	35,251
Staff training & development	3,979	1,750	5,729	3,444	56	3,500
Professional fees	1,097	-	1,097	3,170	-	3,170
Salaries & freelance staff costs	200,853	6,000	206,853	142,866	32,606	175,472
Travel costs	4,080	397	4,477	1,809	1,174	2,983
Premises costs	21,560	1,312	22,872	16,965	2,484	19,449
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	374,879	48,510	423,389	320,023	125,191	445,214
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	18,179	13,240	31,419	(42,064)	(108,451)	(151,055)
Transfers between funds	36,174	(36,174)	-	28,537	(28,537)	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	54,353	(22,934)	31,419	(14,067)	(136,988)	(151,055)
TOTAL FUNDS AT 1 APRIL 2023	246,184	23,322	269,506	260,251	160,310	420,561
TOTAL FUNDS AT 31 MARCH 2024	300,537	388	300,925	246,184	23,322	269,506

The notes on pages 10 to 14 form part of these financial statements.

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

Applause Rural Touring

Balance Sheet at 31 March 2024



	Note	£	2024 £	£	2023 £
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	5	3,511		12,723	
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>316,761</u>		<u>289,122</u>	
		320,272		301,845	
LIABILITIES					
CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year	6	<u>(19,347)</u>		<u>(32,339)</u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			<u>300,925</u>		<u>269,506</u>
NET ASSETS			<u>300,925</u>		<u>269,506</u>
FUNDS OF THE CHARITY					
Restricted funds	8		388		23,322
Unrestricted funds	9				
General		118,088		71,130	
Designated		<u>182,449</u>		<u>175,054</u>	
			<u>300,537</u>		<u>246,184</u>
TOTAL FUNDS			<u>300,925</u>		<u>269,506</u>

Signed on behalf of the trustees

Kat Portman Smith
Trustee
4 December 2024

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

a) Accounting Basis

i) Basis of preparation

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011. Applause Rural Touring meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

ii) Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

It is the trustees' view that there are no material uncertainties regarding Applause Rural Touring's ability to continue in business for the foreseeable future taking into account all available information, and have neither the intention nor the need to liquidate or curtail materially the scale of its operations, and have prepared the accounts on that assumption. The trustees have reviewed the charity's financial position for the coming year and are satisfied that the charity will have sufficient funds, largely due to the continued investment from Arts Council England and our main Local Authority contributors from whom grant funding is largely received in advance.

b) Fund Accounting

- Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity.
- Designated funds are unrestricted funds of the charity which the trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose.
- Restricted Funds are subjected to restrictions on their expenditure imposed by the donor or grant award or through the terms of an appeal.

c) Income

All income is included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. Income from fees received for future events are recognised as income in the accounting period in which the event takes place.

d) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. It is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates.

e) Debtors

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

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)

f) Cash At Bank And In Hand

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

g) Creditors

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

h) Contributions to pension funds

The charity makes available to all employees a defined contribution pension scheme operated by NEST. The pension costs charged to the Statement of Financial Activities represent the amount of the contributions payable to the scheme in respect of the accounting period.

i) Operating Leases

Rentals under operating leases where substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership remain with the lessor have been charged to the profit and loss account as incurred.

j) Cash Flow Statement

The charity has taken advantage of the exemption from preparing a cash flow statement in accordance with FRS 102 on the basis that it qualifies as a small entity.

k) Corporation tax

Applause Rural Touring is a registered charity and as such its income and gains falling within Sections 471 to 489 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 are exempt from corporation tax to the extent that they are applied to its charitable objectives.

2. NET EXPENDITURE

Net expenditure is stated after charging:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Rent payable under operating lease:		
- Property	10,339	4,071
- Equipment	1,438	1,586
Independent Examiner's fee	<u>720</u>	<u>720</u>

Applause Rural Touring
Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024



3. STAFF COSTS AND NUMBERS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and Salaries	168,093	143,654
Social Security Costs	11,518	8,939
Pension Costs	4,048	3,153
	<u>183,659</u>	<u>155,746</u>

The average number of staff employed during the year was 5 (2023: 5). There were no employees with emoluments exceeding £60,000 per annum during the year.

Employee benefits totalled £48,942 (2023: £41,688) for the key management personnel of the charity.

4. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

During the year 2 trustees were reimbursed travel expenses totalling £52 (2023: £nil).

5. DEBTORS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade Debtors	2,156	11,445
Prepayments	1,355	1,278
	<u>3,511</u>	<u>12,723</u>

6. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade Creditors	1,480	14,743
Other Taxes and Social Security	3,847	3,031
Accruals and Deferred Income	13,226	13,978
Pension Contributions	794	587
	<u>19,347</u>	<u>32,339</u>

Included in creditors above is deferred income relating to income received in advance for events to be held in the following financial year as follows:-

	£	£
Brought forward at 1 April 2023	1,650	-
Released to income during the year	(1,650)	-
Receipts in the year deferred – events in 2024/25	7,727	1,650
At 31 March 2024	<u>7,727</u>	<u>1,650</u>

7. FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

Future minimum rentals payable under non-cancellable operating leases are as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Within one year	-	-
Within two to five years	11,797	3,235
	<u>11,797</u>	<u>3,235</u>

8. RESTRICTED FUNDS

	At 1 April 2023	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2024 £
Rother District Council	388	-	-	-	388
Inn Crowd Pubs+	22,934	61,750	(48,510)	(36,174)	-
	<u>23,322</u>	<u>61,750</u>	<u>(48,510)</u>	<u>(36,174)</u>	<u>388</u>

	At 1 April 2022	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2023 £
Rother District Council	388	-	-	-	388
Inn Crowd Pubs+	159,922	16,740	(125,191)	(28,537)	22,934
	<u>160,310</u>	<u>16,740</u>	<u>(125,191)</u>	<u>(28,537)</u>	<u>23,322</u>

Restricted funds consist of funds given by a donor to be spent on specific projects.

Transfers between funds represent:

Inn Crowd Pubs+ - contribution from project to unrestricted funds towards staff costs & overheads in line with the original agreed project budget approved by the funder.

Applause Rural Touring

Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024



9. UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

	At 1 April 2023	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2024 £
General funds	71,130	393,058	(374,879)	28,779	118,088
Designated fund – 5 month reserve	87,015	-	-	7,395	94,410
Designated fund – Essex/outdoors	88,039	-	-	-	88,039
	246,184	393,058	(374,879)	36,174	300,537

	At 1 April 2022	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2023 £
General funds	260,251	277,419	(320,023)	(146,517)	71,130
Designated fund – 5 month reserve	-	-	-	87,015	87,015
Designated fund – Essex/outdoors	-	-	-	88,039	88,039
	260,251	277,419	(320,023)	28,537	246,184

Transfers between funds represent:

Contribution from Inn Crowd Pubs+ project to unrestricted general funds towards staff costs & overheads in line with the original agreed project budget approved by the funder.

Transfer from general funds to designated fund to set aside the free reserves of five months' operating costs.

10. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

There were no related party transactions during the year other than reimbursement of trustee expenses – see note 4 (2023: none).

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Applause Rural Touring for the year ended 31 March 2024

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024, which are set out on pages 8 to 14.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

Independent examiner's statement

Since the company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Association of International Accountants, which is one of the listed bodies.

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

- (1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- (2) the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- (3) the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 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.

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.



Paul Baker FAIA

Applied Accountancy Limited
50a Clifford Way
Maidstone
Kent ME16 8GD

Dated: 4th December 2024