



Trustees' Annual Report for the period

Period start date

06 04 2020

Period end date

06 04 2021

From

To

Section A

Reference and administration details

Charity name

Company of Friends

Other names charity is known by

Registered charity number (if any) 1172644

Charity's principal address

The Black-E

1 Great George Street

Liverpool

Postcode

L1 5EW

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	Alan Wardle			
2	Paul Lafferty			
3	Sheila Rand			
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Names of the trustees for the charity, if any, (for example, any custodian trustees)

Name	Dates acted if not for whole year

Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)

Type of adviser	Name	Address

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

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Section B Structure, governance and management

Description of the charity's trusts

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

Additional governance issues (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant, about:

- policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees;
- the charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works;
- relationship with any related parties;
- trustees' consideration of major risks and the system and procedures to manage them.

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Section C Objectives and activities

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

To promote social inclusion for the public benefit by working with people in Merseyside who have learning difficulties, who are socially excluded as a result of their learning difficulties and to relieve the needs of such people and assist them to integrate into society.

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)

Main activities include

The practise and performance of theatre, art, music and movement therapy,

Providing educational opportunities including visits to art institutions,

Raising public awareness of the issues affecting people with learning difficulties, both generally and in relation to their social exclusion,

Providing workshops, forums and general support, and providing recreational facilities and opportunities for people with learning difficulties.

What we do

Drama is an established method for promoting self-confidence and a sense of belonging and sharing experiences. It breaks the cycle of isolation, brings people together and presents them with challenges they can solve collaboratively. Company of Friends supports its members through the practise and performance of theatre, art, music and movement therapy.

Since 2016, Company of Friends Theatre has staged many productions (at the Black-E), including 'Dr Who and the Unknown Dimension', 'Macbeth', 'Our Will', 'Hamlet', 'Sherlock Holmes and the Wolfman' and 'Nothing to be Done', based on Samuel Becket's work. Also, we have collaborated with LIPA to stage 'The Red and Black', a factual production, involving the Spanish Civil War and some Liverpool Sailors, performed at LIPA and the Anglican Cathedral, and more recently, 'The Tam O'Shanter Project, performed at Bidston, The Wirral.

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.

Accountability

Our members direct the work our Charity undertakes. The volunteers support the members in achieving this. Initially, discussions with the entire group take place. Members will give suggestions as to what they would like to do next. This can range from 'Hamlet' to 'Sherlock Holmes and the Wolfman'. Scripts are written, amended and then rehearsed. Before, finally 'Company of Friends' presents a production to a paying public.

Equal Opportunities

Company of Friends recognises that it is essential to provide to all persons without discrimination. Though we support members predominantly with Downs Syndrome, all our members are treated equally without discrimination. Our members have a range of capacities, which does necessitate achieving a 'good fit' with the individual's ability and the requirements of their involvement.

Company of Friends promotes engagement with other local communities for the development of shared projects. Current projects being undertaken include collaboration with LIPA, Mencap and Liverpool Adult Social Services

Section D

Achievements and performance

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year**Productions**

This current period (2020-2021), has been exceptionally challenging for 'Company of Friends' through the Covid 19 pandemic. Several of our members/volunteers contracted the virus, with one requiring hospital support, and still have long term Covid issues.

Our base of operations 'The Black-E', was in lockdown for the whole of this period. Consequently, we had to come up with alternative solutions, to allow our work, to continue.

Returning once again to the Lark Lane Community Centre (LLCC), rehearsals for the 'Sherlock Holmes and the Wolfman', resumed.

In December 2020, we performed a public performance, at the Centre, and were very well received, by the audience of 65. But, due to further Covid restrictions, rehearsals at the Centre were further curtailed.

So, exploring other avenues, we engaged with Teleconferencing, using Zoom, for members' engagement. This was partly successful, in that our members were challenged into learning new skills, but possibly too ambitious. Zoom takes a certain amount of discipline, and for adults with learning difficulties, this is exceptionally so.

Annually, we collaborate with LIPA on a combined project, and for this year 'The Tam O'Shanter Project', was begun.

This involves collaboration with many other community groups, on a promenade theatre production, where the audience move from place to place during the performance.

Thankfully, the LLCC was again available, enabling both Company of Friends and LIPA to continue rehearsals. The completed production was performed in May 2021, at The Tam O'Shanter farm, and was deemed a great success, with an audience of many hundreds.

Section E

Financial review

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

Company of Friends does not have a Reserves Policy

Details of any funds materially in deficit

Not applicable

Further financial review details (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant about:

- the charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising);
- how expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity;
- investment policy and objectives including any ethical investment policy adopted.

The main expenditures for 'Company of Friends', are 3 fold. Payments to project facilitators, administration and payment for office and rehearsal space.

Over recent years, we have secured grants from 'The Arts Council', 'The Lottery', the 'Community Impact Fund' and Jack's supermarket

When no funding has been secured, we rely on the minimal subscription we charge our members, £4 a session (4 hours), to keep operational.

At times, we have been fortunate that facilitators, administration and hire space has been donated, either for free, or for a token charge.

Section F

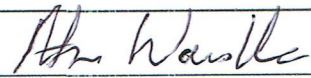
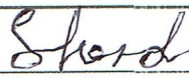
Other optional information

Section G

Dedclaration

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

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	Alan Wardle	Sheila Rand
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Trustee/Secretary	Trustee
Date	30/01/2022	