



Underground Lights

Annual Report and Financial
Statements for the year ended
March 2021

Charity Number: 1179553

Underground Lights

Trustees Report for the year ended 31st March 2021

The trustees of Underground Lights present their report with Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2021. The trustees confirm that the Annual Report and financial statements comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP).

Reference and Administrative Details

Underground Lights is a not for profit Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

Charity Status: Registered with the Charity Commission

Charity number 1179553 (14th August 2018)

Registered Address: c/o Belgrade Theatre, Belgrade Square, Corporation Street, Coventry. CV1 1GS

Trustees who served the charity during the period were as follows:

Jonathan Chilvers (Chair)

Tracy Villiers

Emma Marks

Colin Tysall

Mandip Seehra (appointed October 2020)

Staff: Emma Ormerod, Artistic Director/CEO

Beth Fiducia-Brookes, Lead Drama Facilitator

Wes Finch, Projects & Activities Assistant (appointed as Sessional Facilitator, January 2021)

Jessie Dutton, Projects & Activities Assistant (appointed November 2020)

Frankie Robson, Sessional Facilitator (appointed November 2020)

Volunteer treasurer: Becky Eccleston

Independent examiner of accounts: Alan Rylett

Structure, governance and management

Underground Lights is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. It became a constituted organisation on 23rd March 2018 and a registered charity on 14th August 2018.

The trustees as a group are responsible for the overall governance of the Charity and the constitution requires there to be a minimum of three trustees. The trustees are not remunerated for their work. They aim to meet at least four times per year and are responsible for all major financial and strategic decisions, and the establishment of major policies.

Apart from the first trustees, every trustee is appointed for a term of three years. In selecting trustees the board has regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the Charity. Our commitment to being a member-led organisation means that it is important to recruit individuals to our board who have experience of mental health issues and/or homelessness. Currently of the five people on our board three people have lived experience of either mental health issues or homelessness.

Upon receiving an expression of interest in becoming a trustee, individuals are invited to discuss the organisation and the role further by telephone or face to face either with the Artistic Director/CEO or a member of the board. They are then sent an application to complete and meet more formally with the Chair of trustees. The role and responsibilities of a trustee are discussed in more detail at this point. If both parties wish to pursue the application a new trustee is appointed by resolution at a convened meeting of the board of trustees. New trustees are required to sign a Code of Conduct and are given a pack containing our constitution, business plan, latest annual report and accounts and links to the Charity Commission's advice relating to the roles and responsibilities of trustees.

Day-to-day management of the Charity has been delegated to the Artistic Director/CEO. The Artistic Director/CEO is supported by a Lead Drama Facilitator, Projects & Activities Assistant, sessional facilitators and volunteers who are in turn responsible for the delivery of our work.

Grant applications prior to consideration by the trustees are handled by the Artistic Director/CEO.

Objectives and activities

Underground Lights is an independent community theatre charity that is run for and by people experiencing homelessness and/or mental health issues.

Our charitable purpose is for the public benefit, the relief of those in need, in particular but not exclusively, people experiencing homelessness and/or mental distress in the Coventry, Warwickshire and surrounding area through the provision of drama/performing arts workshops and other activities or forms of training/support.

The trustees confirm that in setting objectives and planning activities, they have given due consideration to general guidance by the Charity Commission relating to public benefit and in particular to its supplementary public benefit guidance.

The objectives of the Charity are as follows:

- To offer regular, structured drama workshops in a relaxed and friendly environment for a diverse range of people.
- To provide opportunities for performance.
- To run one-off workshops/short programmes
- To enable participants to support and lead groups, support other participants, and actively take part in the running of the organisation.
- To run programmes to develop general leadership skills for use in different contexts outside of the organisation.

Achievements and performance

Covid-19 has presented us with many challenges and over the past year and the staff team has collectively worked very hard to continue to deliver sessions and support members. You can read a summary of our year in lockdown [here](#).

Spring and Summer 2020

Creative Groups

- Our spring performance was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As a team we responded rapidly by changing our model of working. We set up three zoom groups and ran 13 weeks of creative activity from the start of April to July. We were able to support approximately 15 of our members in this way (and some members joined the groups via loudspeaker over the phone).
- We also began 1:1 work with members, calling those who did not have internet access each week and providing extra staff support via WhatsApp for members with additional needs. Our bid to Heart of England for £1,200 emergency funding was successful which enabled us to increase staff time to support members.
- We set up a 'Stay Creative and Connected' Facebook group for members to share their work. 31 members and trustees joined this group and this was a supportive place where members have shared their creative work and other activities of interest to them. Several members started watching more online theatre (eg. National Theatre productions).
- At the start of June we also started running weekly 'catch up chatter' sessions for members on a Wednesday afternoon. These groups were well attended with between 7 and 14 people joining us for sessions.
- We held a summer term online sharing to a small invited audience in July and this was well received.

"On Facebook I have been commenting on Underground Lights members' posts. I want them to know that I care about the work that they are doing and I enjoy seeing it so much! I have got to know my friends at Underground Lights even better I think in these past few weeks through seeing their fantastic work and by messaging them. My communication skills have got better because my confidence has grown. I think by getting so involved online, I've become more outgoing. I also think – dare I say it! – that I have slowly been learning about some technical skills such as going on Zoom and Facebook. I've never done these things before. I'm still learning but I'm sure I'll get there in the end!"

Other Activities and Achievements

- Beth (our Lead Drama Facilitator) organised a Q&A with the theatre company Clown Funeral in May which was well attended, with 10 members logging in.
- Naomi Rogers (a former ballet student and now a trainee arts psychotherapist) ran two movement workshops for us via zoom in June.
- Two of our members were accepted onto the City of Culture leadership programme.
- Beth and Wes (Projects and Activities Assistant) recorded a 'City Warm Ups' video for the Belgrade Theatre.
- One of our members also created dance videos for our Facebook group, one of which was also shared as part of the 'City Warm Ups' scheme.

Projects: Creative Packs and 'Send a Smile' Postcards

"It struck me that not everybody has materials at home to create art. So I suggested making creative packs to send out to members, with a programme of activities and the materials required to take part in them. The idea was a hit".

Hayley

Hayley joined Underground Lights as a member of our Creative Café in July 2019. At the start of the lockdown, she suggested the idea of putting together creative packs for people who couldn't afford them. So we worked with City of Culture, Crisis, Grapevine, Arty Folks and the Belgrade Theatre to develop the idea. City of Culture agreed to fund the project and 150 packs were delivered to UL members (and partner organisation members) for Easter 2020. City of Culture subsequently delivered a further 450 across the city.

In May 2020 we were joined by the national organisation With One Voice (now Arts and Homelessness International) who supported us to develop the second stage of the project. Hayley (with our drama facilitator, Beth) developed the postcards and masks project for the second stage of the packs. We sent out packs with 'smile mask'

materials and blank postcards that people could decorate with something that made them smile. Underground Lights (Beth and Hayley) and the Belgrade Theatre then ran two mask making workshops in July.

During the third lockdown in January 2021, Hayley suggested that we explore Shadow Puppets in our online creative groups. The third set of creative packs were developed together with our members. Taking inspiration from Aesop's Fables, members chose stories and animal characters. Hayley and Jessie (our Projects and Activities Assistant) then developed materials for further creative packs and over 60 packs were delivered to UL, Crisis members and residents of the Days Hotel.

Meanwhile, Arts and Homelessness International were sending out postcards to their partner organisation members across the world and the project has now travelled to homeless communities in the USA, Brazil, South Africa, India, Japan, and Australia. It has been wonderful to see Beth and Hayley's idea grow, develop and travel across the world! It has also been an important opportunity for partnership working (particularly with City of Culture and Arts and Homelessness International) and people have been very appreciative of their postcards. We are planning for the postcards to be displayed during the Arts and Homelessness Festival in October 2021.

"We've got to see different talents by members, whether it be colouring, paintings, drawings, and needle crafts. Thank you for supplying the materials needed to while away the time instead of watching TV to only hear about what this terrible virus is causing to our planet [...] Friday is the highlight of my week where I can go onto zoom and see my drama friends and even do activities with them which has been good for my wellbeing. If I didn't have this help I don't know what I'd do".

Autumn 2020

Creative Groups

- For the first half of term (September and October) we ran three socially distanced support groups at the Belgrade with restricted numbers.
- However, November saw us with the challenge of working through the second lockdown. On this occasion we were able to continue working in person with eight members who didn't have internet access or who couldn't connect to Zoom for different reasons. Members who were able to connect online worked via Zoom with the staff team.
- We ended our term with our Lockdown Lessons online sharing event, which also enabled members who weren't online to participate via Zoom in the Patrick Suite at the Belgrade Theatre. 26 audience members attended this event.

- 2020 was an extremely challenging year, but by focusing on supporting our regular group of 28 members we found ways to enable everyone to stay creative and connected.

"I love my drama! Wednesday mornings are just for me".

Emma joined our Creative Café sessions in August 2019. She found out about Underground Lights because she was a member of Crisis. Emma has been a member of our Wednesday morning support group and really enjoyed developing her character, Chantelle, for our [Commedia dell'arte film](#). At the start of the second lockdown Emma was worried that she wouldn't be able to join online Zoom sessions because she didn't have enough data on her phone. So she was really happy that the members who weren't online could continue meeting. You can see Emma talking about what the drama group means to her [here](#).

Other activities and achievements

- During the autumn term we were involved in a range of online activities:
 - Monthly online Open Mic event run jointly with Crisis.
 - Ascension Dance – In Touch project (run by Ascension Dance for Crisis and UL members, with staff support from Crisis and UL).
 - Poetry group (delivered by Frankie and Ben) – for UL and Crisis members, leading to the performance '[Community to me is...](#)' in October.
- Staff team attended meetings of Coventry's new Arts and Homelessness Forum.
- We supported two Occupational Therapy students from Coventry University who attended our groups as part of their 3rd year placement at the Belgrade Theatre.
- Jessie Dutton was appointed as our new Projects & Activities Assistant.
- Yvonne Cullen, a PhD student at the University of Kent began a longitudinal study with our members on their experiences of agency within Underground Lights.

"Underground Lights is really, really good for being able to express ourselves, it's really good for everyone to be able to just do our best ... and the most important thing is that everyone supports each other and is enthusiastic and I don't think I've ever experienced it before in my life."

Spring Term 2021

Shadow Puppets

We had hoped to meet in person for the spring term but moved back online and to remote activities in line with government restrictions and to help keep our members

safe. As always we wanted to help keep our members connected and creative during this time, so decided to send out our third activity pack.

Hayley (who initiated the original creative packs in lockdown one), suggested we explore Shadow Puppets this term. We thought this was a great idea and really different to our previous projects (devising theatre, Commedia dell'arte, pantomime and improvisation), and it's been something members have enjoyed exploring.

Linking the creative packs to the theme for the term has continued to enable our members to lead the process on what they want to create as they have the resources they need. Members, who were unable to access Zoom, in addition to these creative packs, have also been posted a disposable camera and challenged to take creative photos which we hope to use as part of an exhibition in the future.

During our drama workshops members shared ideas and discussed themes they thought would work well, and at the suggestion of our Project and Activities Assistant Jessie, we have taken inspiration from Aesop's Fables. Members chose stories and fine-tuned the message they want to convey for modern audience. They decided to keep the animal characters and created the puppets. Together over zoom we made trees and other shadow puppets which we then used to tell these stories. The shadow puppet stories were then recorded over zoom and on member's phones and edited together, along with the audio and music to make a short video by each group.

It has been really exciting to see the collaborative way in which members have led this process; from coming up with the initial idea, to what was needed in the activity packs, to which shadow puppets each group decided they would make. Our members amaze me with their creativity, enthusiasm and supportiveness.

By Beth

- Due to the third national lockdown we returned to running online groups and making 1:1 calls. Groups developed shadow puppet creative packs and over 60 packs were sent to Underground Lights and Crisis members, and residents at the Days Hotel.
- We received funding from National Survivor User Network (NSUN) for a BSL interpreter for our online shadow puppet performance and 35 audience members joined us for this event.
- In addition to our online drama groups, we also ran online Creative Café sessions during the spring term.

Audience Feedback:

"The storytelling is mesmerizing"

"There is such a lovely dream like quality to some of these tales – magical".

"This has been so incredible. I've so, so enjoyed this".

Other activities and achievements

- We co-hosted the Arts and Homelessness Forum for three months, with one of our members co-chairing the meetings.
- Several members joined the steering group for 'Home', the Arts and Homelessness Festival in October 2021.
- Our sessional facilitators also began to work on our outreach project and despite the many challenges of lockdown, ran two online workshops to create an audio track for the final piece (to be launched in July 2021).
- We developed a Staff Handbook and ran two training sessions for the staff team.
- 'A Stitch in Time', a collaborative project with Needle Craft for Wellbeing, saw four of our members' poetry and crafted items come together with the yarners work to make a beautiful window display at the Belgrade Theatre for people to visit as part of their Lockdown Exercise. Frankie who led the project for Underground Lights spoke about the project on BBC Coventry and Warwickshire in February.
- Rob, one of our members also took part in Cardboard Citizens online West Midlands specific performance 'The Vagrancy Act' and panel discussion. Several members also joined to support and engaged in the discussion too.
- Tudor Trust offered a wellbeing grant of £2,000 to their grantees for trustees, staff and volunteers. Through this fund Underground Lights team members participated in a variety of activities (baking, photography, drumming, art etc.) to support their individual wellbeing. It has also funded reflective practice sessions for our core staff team.
- We were successful in our application for legal pro bono work (via The Fore Foundation) and the global law firm Shearman and Stirling began a policy and legal audit of the charity.

"It all went seamlessly! I particularly liked the fact that we got a BSL signer on board, I thought that was very inclusive. I thought it was magic".

"I'm proud of our piece... because it was so hard getting us all together every week... it looked so professional. I'm particularly proud of myself for being there every week and committing to it... It's really helped with my depression, this drama group – and I think it's saved me."

Financial Review

The Covid-19 pandemic meant that during this period there were unexpected demands with regard to our capacity and resources as an organisation. Our emergency fundraising efforts were successful and we received additional grants from Heart of England and Groundwork - Tesco Bags of Help scheme. City of Culture and Arts and Homelessness International also supported the Creative Packs and Postcards Project work.

At a board meeting in January 2021, trustees approved a payment of £150 for freelance photography work by Mandip Seehra that he had completed prior to applying for and becoming a trustee in the financial year 2020/1. He did not invoice because of the second part of the work he was due to do which did not happen because of the pandemic. He then became a trustee. The board agreed that this was permissible in our constitution and took steps to ensure that the decision was fair (Mandip did not attend this part of the board meeting and was not involved in the decision).

In preparing the financial statements the trustees believe that Underground Lights is able to continue as a going concern until April 2022. However, continuing in operational existence over the coming year will deplete our reserves and we will not be able to continue to operate beyond this date without successfully raising more funds. Fundraising both for the medium and longer term will continue to be a priority for the coming year.

This report was approved by the trustees on **15th July 2021** and signed on their behalf by:



Jonathan Chilvers, Chair of Trustees



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

**Independent examiner's report
on the accounts**

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Charity Name
Underground Lights

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31st March 2021

**Charity no
(if any)**

1179553

Set out on pages

One to Six

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/03/2021.

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

As the charity trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with 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 all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect,:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did 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.

Signed:

A. Rylett

Date:

28th April 2021

Name:

Alan Rylett

**Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):**

Address:

1 Borrowdale Drive

Leamington Spa

Warwickshire CV32 6NY

Section B**Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

The accounts were examined and to the extent that papers have been provided are correct. I haven't examined detailed invoices paid but have accepted that the computer system holds all details.

The computer records have made the accounts clear and precise.

Report of the Directors and unaudited financial Statements for the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 for Underground Lights, Charities Number 1179553.

This report has been prepared by A.M. Rylett following a full examination of the accounts for the period.

Balance Sheet provided from the "Zero" computer system and attached to this report were found to be a correct representation of the balances for the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.

1. Statutory Information

Underground Lights is a Charity number 1179553 under the Charities Commission for England and Wales.

2. Accounting Policies

Basis of preparing the accounts

The Financial Statement for Underground Lights has been prepared following the Charities Commission regulations SORP 2011 using a standard accruals accounting basis.

Turnover

Turnover represents grants and donations made to the charity during the accounting period.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided on all assets in excess of £1,000 on a "straight line" basis over a three year period.

3. Employees

The Charity employed an Artistic Director, Lead Drama Facilitator and a Projects and Activities Assistant during the accounting period none of whom were paid in excess of £50,000.

4. Tangible Fixed Assets

The Charity has no Tangible fixed assets as of 31st March 2021.

5. Debtors: Amounts falling due within one year

The Charity has no trade debtors as of 31st March 2020.

6. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

There was a single creditor amount due to pensions provider. This is shown correctly on the Balance Sheet.

7. Income and Expenditure for the year April 2020 to March 2021

The Income and Expenditure report provided from the computer system was found to be correct and is attached to this report.

8. Funds

As at the 31st March 2021 the Charity held the money in the following funds

Restricted Funds

Fund	Amount
Belgrade	£500
City of Culture	£999
Tudor Trust	£22,739
WMCA	£1,244
Total Restricted	£26,475
Unrestricted Funds	£15,723
Total Funds Available	£42,198

AM Rylett
May 12th 2021

Balance Sheet

Underground Lights
As at 31 March 2021

31 MAR 2021

Current Assets

Cash at bank and in hand	
Treasurers Account	42,354
Total Cash at bank and in hand	42,354
Total Current Assets	42,354

Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

Pensions Payable	156
Total Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	156

Net Current Assets (Liabilities) 42,198

Total Assets less Current Liabilities 42,198

Net Assets 42,198

Capital and Reserves

Current Year Earnings	2,257
Retained Earnings	39,941
Total Capital and Reserves	42,198

Income and Expenditure

Underground Lights

For the year ended 31 March 2021

2021

Income	
Grant Income	
City of Culture	713
Donations	1,611
Heart of England	2,700
Other Income	5,239
Tudor Trust	27,000
Total Grant Income	37,263
Total Income	37,263
Expenses	
Staffing Costs	29,573
Volunteers	
Volunteer Travel Expenses	24
Volunteer Wellbeing Fund	756
Total Volunteers	780
Operational / Activity	
Creative Packs	586
Operational/Activity (Outreach Project)	944
Refreshments	74
Venue Hire	150
Total Operational / Activity	1,754
Publicity and Marketing	
Publicity & Marketing - Mailchimp	82
Publicity & Marketing - Photography	150
Publicity & Marketing - Printing / Flyers	103
Publicity & Marketing - Website	57
Total Publicity and Marketing	393
Other Administrative Costs	
Admin, IT & Training Costs - DBS	118
Admin, IT & Training Costs - Insurance	161
Admin, IT & Training Costs - Training and Development	638
Office costs - general	244
Office costs - mobile phones	569
Office costs - session resources	142
On Costs	635
Total Other Administrative Costs	2,507
Total Expenses	35,006
Net Income (Expenditure)	2,257