

# UNDERGROUND LIGHTS COMMUNITY THEATRE

Underground Lights

Annual Report and Financial Statements  
for the year ended March 2022

Charity Number: 1179553

## Underground Lights

### Trustees Report for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022

The trustees of Underground Lights present their report with Financial Statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. 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

Charity Status: Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)  
Charity number 1179553 (Registered 14<sup>th</sup> 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 (until December 2021)

Colin Tysall

Mandip Seehra

Staff: Emma Ormerod, Artistic Director/CEO

Beth Fiducia-Brookes, Lead Drama Facilitator

Jessie Dutton, Projects & Activities Assistant

Wes Finch, Sessional Facilitator

Frankie Robson, Sessional Facilitator

Hayley Harman, Sessional Assistant (from September 2021)

Becky Eccleston, Finance Officer (from January 2022)

Volunteers: Chris Campell (IT, Marketing and website)

Debbie Bridgeman (Creative Café)

Malcolm Cave (Creative Café)

Independent examiner of accounts: Alan Rylett



## Structure, governance and management

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

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, strategic 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, Finance Officer, Sessional Facilitators/Assistants 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.

Our vision is to be a safe and inspiring creative community, for people on the margins of society, that is owned and run by us.



The mission of the Charity is as follows:

- To bring together people experiencing (or at risk of experiencing) homelessness, mental or emotional distress, trauma, social isolation and marginalisation.
- To develop confidence, skills and friendship networks by providing creative opportunities and empowering people to explore their own creative identities through theatre, dance, poetry and music.
- To support each other and create a safe and caring space where people can belong.
- To challenge assumptions and stereotypes through the creation of high-quality artistic work.

### Achievements and performance

This year we have been back fully running face-to-face activities and performances. The staff team has worked hard delivering our activities and supporting members with additional activities through the City of Culture year.

### Summer 2021

#### Core Activity: Creative Groups

- *Weekly Drama Groups:* Funded by West Midlands Combined Authority our two weekly groups explored issues of digital connection and exclusion this term. They developed a survey (data analysed by Beth and Lisa from Springboard Company Gertrude) around this. The groups also developed pieces filmed by David (a Coventry University student who has been working with the Belgrade as part of the Seaview Media Academy). Group members who weren't involved in the Cardboard Camps (and therefore able to attend end of term workshops) planned and ran a workshop around these themes on 16<sup>th</sup> July.
- *New members:* 7 new members have joined us over the course of this term.
- *Placement Students:* We have supported 3 OT students who have joined us in sessions. They have also been supported to do focused work with three members regarding issues around returning to the Belgrade/UL following the pandemic (e.g. supporting people to travel to groups, doing grounding and breathing exercises with them etc.)

*"That was new to me...a new skill...It made me feel great and happy and all that...it was filmed...Frankie, she was choreographing me, telling me how to do things...and these guys were filming it." Michael says the experience "made me feel kind of star stricken. Because, I was in HMV and this guy said to me 'I saw you on the screen, you were doing that thing about a shed, weren't you?'...I've been noticed. And then my sister said, she said she watched it and she said she enjoyed it...Lots of people have seen it."*



### Other Activities and Achievements

- *The Shed* - Frankie (sessional facilitator) has been leading this piece of work with Wes (sessional facilitator) and our freelance videographer, Ryan. Frankie and Wes ran two workshops in the spring term to record audio material. The outreach elements of the project have proved extremely challenging with regard to access to the Days Hotel. Instead the team worked with regular member Michael on a movement piece for the visual element of the film based on his own experiences of homelessness to produce a high quality piece of work entitled 'The Shed'.

#### ***Projects for City of Culture (Cardboard Citizens & Arts and Homelessness Festival)***

- *Cardboard Camps*: Hayley was employed as the Workshops Assistant for the camps; four UL members are on the Working Group for the project and eight members performed in the Cardboard Camps project in B2 at the end of July.
- *Ruff Tuff (musical)*: Emma supported the interview process for the Cardboard Citizens Choir Assistant with Choir With No Name. Thirteen of our members were supported to participate in this in the Ruff Tuff choir on the main stage, with two members on technical placements and a further three on a comms placement with the Belgrade. Wes worked as Choir Assistant for the musical.
- UL received funding from Cardboard Citizens to support these projects.
- *HOME Festival*: five UL members were on the steering group for the HOME festival. UL members have been closely involved in the events, activities and exhibitions for the festival. Beth and Hayley have curated the Send a Smile Postcard Project developed with the Belgrade Theatre and Arts and Homelessness International, Hayley and David (from AHI) have curated the Visual Art Exhibition. Several people are presenting at the Arts and Homelessness summit, running sessions as part of the summit's creative hub etc. Our films, Digital Divide and [The Shed](#) are to be shown at the festival's home grown film night.
- *Cov Biennial photography project*: we supported this project by providing materials – disposable cameras - and promoting with our members, several of whom were involved.

### Autumn 2021

#### Core Activity: Creative Groups

*Weekly drama groups* continued to run this term on the theme of transformation. At the end of term we had an informal sharing of individual work. It was also an opportunity to celebrate the incredible amount of work we have all done this year! 15 of our members performed their work. You can see the photos and read our review of the year here. You can read our 'Festive Roundup' via Mailchimp in December [here](#).

- *Waiting list* continued to grow (14 people on the waiting list).
- *Coventry and Warwickshire's Recovery Academy* and UL have connected to deliver a four workshop course over four weeks for people new to drama in November facilitated by Beth with support from volunteers Malcolm and Tracy. Average attendance 2-3 participants.
- *Film about UL*, two members Andrea & Debbie (supported by Ashford, Wes, Abbie & Emma) produced a film about UL.



When asked what her greatest highlight at Underground Lights has been, Cecelia said it was being part the Ruff Tuff. *"The Ruff Tuff Cream Puff Estate Agency. We did singing, and a little bit of acting on stage... That was the one that bonded us more together as a group. Because we were virtually sort of living here [Belgrade Theatre] It wasn't just like the ones performing. We'd got, like, Beth, and Emma, and Hayley. Although you weren't part of the show, Underground Lights was there for us... When the show was going on for the whole week and we were here for little bits of rehearsals... it became like the Belgrade was, sort of like, your home from home..."*

### Other Activities and Achievements

- Abbie (Assistant Producer at the Belgrade) working with UL one day a week this term has been working on updating our fundraising spreadsheet and identifying potential sources of income.

### Strategic

- Strategic planning briefing was shared with all trustees and staff members.
- Core Strategic Group has started forming.
- Approaches to safeguarding – as part of the Belgrade funding, Jessie and Emma had additional time to develop our safeguarding policies and procedures. This money will also cover safeguarding training for board, staff team and volunteers.

### Spring 2022

#### Core Activity: Creative Groups

- *Streams of Consciousness* – walking tour developed in our weekly drama groups, commissioned by City of Culture, with Community Producers Bengy and Tracy, project managed by Beth. Performed on the 1<sup>st</sup> April. 20 members performed and had a great time (see photos on [Facebook!](#))  
Some audience feedback:
  - *"A beautiful, atmospheric stroll through the city and the lives of the performers. Very funny and very touching".*
  - *"Really original interesting way of looking at issues around homelessness and mental health. I loved all the individual pieces, the poems the songs, rap and music. Seeing beyond the words a glimpse of each performer. The circle in the shopping centres was brave and challenging and dramatic. Well done all!"*
- *Creative Cafes* returned at Central Hall led by Ben & Hayley (first half of term) and Frankie & Brendan Leslie (freelance facilitator) (second half of term). The two *Open Mic* event popular with members and audiences alike!
- *Recovery Academy*: Emma ran a 4 week online Creating Characters course with an informal online sharing in the final week. Four people shared their creative work at this event.
- *Kairos Women Working Together*: Kairos works with women at risk of, or who are experiencing, sexual exploitation. Beth and Hayley ran a workshop on Strength with the Queen Bees group.
- *Coventry, A Relationship City*: Emma and Hayley attended this event for practitioners in February, organised by Grapevine and ran some warm up exercises for the group.
- *Strategic Planning*: Sarah Yiannoullou worked with our Core Strategy Group and ran our second strategic workshop in January.



## Staff Team Recruitment

- *Membership Manager (new role) – Jessie Dutton*
- *Projects and Activities Assistant – Hayley Harman*
- *Sessional Assistant – Alisha Kadir*
- *Website & IT Officer (8hrs per month) – Jo Packwood*
- Chris will be training Jo and then stepping back as our Website and IT volunteer.
- Paul Okey stepped back as our marketing volunteer; however Jo has InDesign experience and will be given overtime hours to produce our annual report and strategic documents. Jo was initially appointed as our fundraising volunteer and has said that she is happy to continue supporting us with this.

## Strategic

- Strategic planning process has now started. The Core Strategic Group (Emma, Tracy, Rob, Bengy, Jessie, Susan, Sim, Sarah Yiannoullou) met for an initial discussion around our purpose and values - 'Who do we think we are?' & 'Who do others think we are?'
- The first workshop was held at the end of November (Malcolm, Andrea, Cecelia, Abbie, Hannah Barker also joined this meeting). We had a positive and productive discussion about UL vision, mission and values.
- We sent out a survey to our mailing list and on social media to gather feedback. We also have statements from project partners about our work gathered as part of the Arts Council bid.
- We have connected with NSUN to discuss safeguarding approaches within user-led organisations.
- Our Springboard Company status at the Belgrade ended on March 11<sup>th</sup>, we continue to receive in kind support and to run workshops in association with the Belgrade.

*"I am most proud of myself for going to the Open Mic with my puppets which was something I always wanted to do, but never had the confidence and I could not have done without the friendships and support I got from UL. Overcoming challenges has made me want to do more with puppets and set up a workshop".*

## UL Evaluation for Groundworks

### *Mental Health Tent*

Underground Lights (UL) is a lived experience-led organisation, where all participants and many of the staff and trustees have their own personal experiences of homelessness and/or mental distress. Within this context Belgrade Theatre supported UL to develop the *Mental Health Tent* during the Cardboard Camps process as they developed a new trauma-informed model of working in which participant and staff wellbeing is at the heart of the creative process. Funding supported additional capacity for the UL staff team to provide safeguarding and pastoral support to 8 members during the Cardboard Camps and 12 members during the Ruff Tuff project. During the projects, 3 members were at high risk of suicide which required skilled and intensive partnership and safeguarding work. All members completed the project and during an evaluation



session reported that the additional support provided by UL staff members during this process had been valuable and this had enabled them to participate in the projects with Cardboard Citizens: *"It has been helpful to talk to UL staff during the camps and choir about any problems"; "Members of UL have been friendly and kind. I have had a unique opportunity and members of UL staff have supported me"*. Funding also enabled the UL Artistic Director/CEO to receive clinical supervisions, which given the high risk and demanding nature of the safeguarding work was key to maintaining her own wellbeing during this time. This in turn equipped her to support the UL staff team in their work with participants, and this enabled them to more fully engage in Cardboard Citizens' creative work. Learning and reflections from this included the development of UL's safeguarding policies, processes and training; the development of a trauma-informed approach; gathering case studies and making links with the National Survivor User Network, in order to further develop best practice and share this model with other lived experience-led organisations.

### *Creative Umbrella*

The Creative Umbrella supported a number of wrap-around events and activities during the run of Cardboard Citizens' *Ruff Tuff Cream Puff Estate Agency*. Funding enabled UL staff members to upskill and support two participants on technical placements during the show and three other participants on comms placements with the Belgrade, which resulted in a range of work including blogs, interviews and a short film about the transformation of UL. Funding also increased capacity within the team to develop and support other wrap around events including Cardboard Citizens' Resistance Theatre day, the Arts and Homelessness International Summit, Open Mic event, Film Night and the Send a Smile Global postcards project (initiated and developed by two members of the UL collective). These wrap around events enabled UL to provide direct and regular support to 24 people with lived experience of homelessness and/or mental health issues. Sixteen people with lived experience of homelessness who engaged with these events and activities have now signed up to become UL members and are keen to continue exploring their creativity and develop their skills.

When members did a 'stars sparkled on me when...' exercise the responses often related to the Creative Umbrella work:

- *"Watching the Digital Divide film on Film Night"*
- *"Having my voice heard in the HOME Festival Steering Group"*
- *"Flash Mob"*
- *"Watching the Rio film at the Summit (postcards project)"*

*"Being able to share and voice my feelings at the festival which was from all around the world".*



## Financial Review

Our fundraising efforts were successful and we received grants from Tudor Trust, City of Culture, and Cardboard Citizens, Tesco Groundwork, Belgrade Theatre, Eveson Charitable Trust, Albert Hunt, and Arts and Homelessness International.

In preparing the financial statements the trustees believe that Underground Lights is able to continue as a going concern until April 2023. We have delayed the Arts Council funded project start date due to our Artistic Director and project leads' ill health.

This report was approved by the trustees on 5.12.2022 and signed on their behalf by:

MANDIP SINGH SEHRA



Acting Chair of Trustees



**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES**  
For the year ended 31 March 2022

|   | Unrestricted<br>fund | Restricted<br>funds | Year ended<br>31.03.22<br>Total Funds | Year ended<br>31.03.21<br>Total Funds |
|---|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Income</b>   |                      |                     |                                       |                                       |
| Donations   | 2,216                | -                   | 2,216                                 | 1,611                                 |
| Charitable Activities   | -                    | 39,500              | 39,500                                | 30,413                                |
| Other Income  | 12,103               | 9,012               | 21,115                                | 5,239                                 |
| <b>Total Income</b>   | <b>14,319</b>        | <b>48,512</b>       | <b>62,831</b>                         | <b>37,263</b>                         |
| <b>Expenditure</b>  |                      |                     |                                       |                                       |
| Staffing Costs  | 11,407               | 29,597              | 41,004                                | 29,573                                |
| Volunteers' costs   | 31                   | 359                 | 390                                   | 780                                   |
| Operational / Activity  | 419                  | 1,771               | 2,190                                 | 1,754                                 |
| Publicity / Marketing   | 701                  | -                   | 701                                   | 393                                   |
| Other Administration  | 1,160                | 2,258               | 3,418                                 | 2,507                                 |
| <b>Total Expenditure</b>                                      | <b>13,718</b>        | <b>33,985</b>       | <b>47,703</b>                         | <b>35,006</b>                         |
| <b>NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE)</b>                             | <b>601</b>           | <b>14,527</b>       | <b>15,128</b>                         | <b>2,257</b>                          |
| Total funds brought forward at 31 <sup>st</sup><br>March 2021 | 15,723               | 26,475              | 42,198                                | 39,941                                |
| <b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>                            | <b>16,324</b>        | <b>41,002</b>       | <b>57,326</b>                         | <b>42,198</b>                         |



**BALANCE SHEET**  
For the year ended 31 March 2022

|   | Unrestricted<br>fund | Restricted<br>funds | Year ended<br>31.03.22<br>Total Funds | Year ended<br>31.03.21<br>Total Funds |
|---|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Current Assets</b>                             |                      |                     |                                       |                                       |
| Cash at Bank                                      | 16,437               | 41,002              | 57,439                                | 42,354                                |
| <b>Total Current Assets</b>                       | <b>16,437</b>        | <b>41,002</b>       | <b>57,439</b>                         | <b>42,354</b>                         |
| Creditors: amounts falling due within<br>One year | 113                  | -                   | 113                                   | 156                                   |
| <b>Net current assets/(liabilities)</b>           | <b>16,324</b>        | <b>41,002</b>       | <b>57,326</b>                         | <b>42,198</b>                         |
| <b>FUNDS</b>                                      |                      |                     |                                       |                                       |
| Unrestricted fund                                 |                      |                     | 16,324                                | 15,723                                |
| Restricted fund                                   |                      |                     | 41,002                                | 26,475                                |
| <b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>                                |                      |                     | <b>57,326</b>                         | <b>42,198</b>                         |

For the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 the charity was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

**Charity Trustees Responsibilities:**

- The members have not required the charity to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476; and
- The charity trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

The financial statements on pages were approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue and signed on their behalf by:

Name: MANDIP SINGH SEEHRA

Date: 5.12.2022





**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**For the year ended 31 March 2022**

**Basis of preparing the financial statements**

The financial statements of the CIO have been prepared using the accruals basis together with the Statement of Recommended Practice for Charities 2011.

**Taxation**

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

**Fund Accounting**

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes. Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

**Volunteer help**

The value of any volunteer help received is not included in the financial statements but is described in the trustees' report.

**TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS**

No Member received any remuneration or other benefits for being a trustee.

**Trustees' expenses** - No expenses were paid to trustees

**RESTRICTED FUNDS**

**Restricted funds held at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022**

|                      | Balance<br>b/f | Received      | Spent           | Balance<br>c/f |
|----------------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Events and Workshops | 2,492          | 13,512        | (12,118)        | 3,886          |
| Core salaries        | 22,739         | 35,000        | (21,232)        | 36,507         |
| Wellbeing grant      | 1,244          | -             | (635)           | 609            |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>26,475</b>  | <b>48,512</b> | <b>(33,985)</b> | <b>41,002</b>  |

Restricted funding received from:

AHI – Creative Café and Open Mic events

Coventry City of Culture – Creative Café

Tesco Charitable Foundation – Additional staffing

Tudor Trust – Salaries and Wellbeing grant

Grants were gratefully received from Albert Hunt, Amnesty Homelessness International, Belgrade Theatre, Cardboard Citizens, Coventry City of Culture, Eveson Charitable Trust, Heart of England Charitable Foundation, Tesco Charitable Foundation and Tudor Trust.



**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 2022

**Charity no  
(if any)**

1179553

**Set out on pages**

One and Fourteen

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/03/2022.

**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 Lylet*

**Date:**

28<sup>th</sup> November 2022

**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.

The computer records have made the accounts clear and precise.