



Bispham CastAways

Community Theatre Group



CIO Registered Charity Number 1182404

**Annual Report of
Bispham CastAways CIO
RCN - 1182404**

Address - 40 Cavendish Road, Bispham, Blackpool, FY2 9JR

**FINANCIAL YEAR
January 2024 - December 2024**

**TRUSTEE REPORTING PERIOD
December 2023 - December 2024**

**TRUSTEES
Susan Hope
Angela Crossley
Hayley Price
Debbie Flavell
Martin Thompson
Suzanne McEachran
Ian Dodd**

Henry “Harry” Chambers - Retired January 2024

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Bispham CastAways CIO is governed by a Constitution together with a set of policies including Safeguarding, Social Media and Public Benefit policies. Each member has also been given a copy of (and on joining the group signed their agreement to) our Member Code of Conduct, Privacy Notice and Netiquette Policy. At the moment, we do not have any policies or procedures for induction or training of trustees. We believe that as we are such a small charity and have a stable group of trustees, this is not a priority at the present time. During this period we were just coming out of lockdown and have continued to deal with the effects of COVID on our practices and audiences.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The charitable purposes of Bispham CastAways CIO are:

- (a) the advancement of arts, culture and heritage, particularly relating to theatre and performance, through the presentation of theatre performances and other performance arts for the public benefit and by providing opportunities for people to learn about, participate and engage in theatre, in particular but not exclusively for those people living in Bispham and the surrounding areas.
- (b) the relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health and disability through, but not exclusively, the provision of theatre performances, outreach and awareness programs, for the public benefit, with a view to improving the conditions of life for such people living in Bispham and the surrounding areas.

What this actually means is as follows. Firstly, that we take anyone from the area who wants to become a member of Bispham CastAways and experience the benefit of participating in theatre, no matter age (as long as 16+), gender, sexuality, ethnicity, disability, past experience or confidence in their own ability. Secondly, that we strive to perform as many different, high quality shows throughout the year for the public in the Bispham and Blackpool areas, so they can engage with good theatre at as low a cost as possible. We use our Artistic Merit policy to ensure we are not solely relying on “in-house” or unpublished scriptwriters, also maintaining NODA membership to ensure with included independent reviews of productions to make sure we are creating quality, varied theatre, within our means. Finally, that through “going on the road”, developing relationships and programmes with social

prescribers and other charitable organisations, that we can help those in need in the area, especially to help those with mental health issues.

Our Public Benefit Policy is followed at all times and any monies made are funnelled back into the objectives of Bispham CastAways with all Trustees and members being volunteers, with zero employees.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Our policies and dedicated board of trustees have allowed us to grow a diverse range of members of Bispham CastAways from the Bispham and Blackpool area. We have helped many of them to use theatre to grow in confidence. Participation in our group has supplied essential support to several members who have had a difficult time, providing support through bereavement, as well as medical issues. Through conversations with members, the Trustees feel that our productions and activities have improved the lives and mental health of our members. We have ensured that any vulnerable members are set up to succeed, utilising our safeguarding policies. Our group chats are regularly utilised to keep members in touch with each other and we are often quoted as being very supportive. We attended the NODA District 2 Awards evening in February 2024, organised a group trip to see Unfortunate at the Grand Theatre in May 2024, attended Claremont Gala as a group in July 2024, had an in-house Christmas party December 2024 including fun games, and have had several fun photo shoots with our photographer Abbie Dodd, all boosting the feeling of camaraderie in the group. We also altered our show timings this season to three productions a year; a play in April, murder mystery in August and pantomime in December. This has allowed more time to produce shows without undue stress on members and was agreed by all members at the AGM in January 2024.

During the reporting period, we have continued to work with Holy Family RC Church to ensure that we are adding value to the community where we have our theatre home, helping with maintenance and ensuring we use the facilities with care and consideration. The on-site garage that we rent has become invaluable but has added to our group costs. We gained a small grant from the local council to purchase a new laptop and virus protection in December 2023 which has helped in our production of sound effects.

In December 2023, we took a one act play and Christmas songs into two local care homes in our community; Glen Tanar and Autumn Leaves. Further increasing our profile in the community and entertaining residents and a visiting nursery.



In January 2024, just before our AGM, we received a massive total of 14 nominations in the NODA District 2 awards for our 2023 season, demonstrating our continued focus on maintaining a high standard of Artistic Merit while accepting all new members. This represented a new high for our group and we hope to continue to build on our successes at the awards ceremony.

Our first production of the reporting period was “Tabitha” in April 2024, the classic comedy mystery by Arnold Ridley and Mary Cathcart Borer. This was our first attempt at a classic and working with a script from Samuel French (now under the umbrella of Concorde Theatricals) which comes with it’s own additional expenses and special rules. Despite having to work to very strict rules, the rehearsals for this show were great fun and, even though costs are higher to produce a “classic show”, this experience has not put the group off trying to produce another. The performances were well received and brought in yet more new members to the group. The NODA review yet again mentioned our community feel:

“In true Bispham Castaways style, a full community feel was brought to the production through the cast, crew, and front of house team. It would be

fair to say that there were differing level of experience and expertise within the cast, but nevertheless, they all performed to their upmost strengths and helped one another to unravel the story and instil the element of curiosity as to ‘Who killed the cat!!’”

Nate Benson (NODA District 2 Rep)

We then moved onto our annual interactive murder mystery, “A Game Of Greed And Gore” by our own Belladonna Mysteries and based partly on a live game of Cluedo. We continue to keep ticket prices as low as we can to make sure that as many in the local community as possible can access live theatre performances, despite having to raise our prices for this production slightly due to rising catering costs, we still had full houses. This also brought even more new members into the fold, including one referred to us by a mental health professional! During the rehearsals for this, we also joined our local community by participating in Claremont Gala, adding to our community impact and further increasing our profile in our local area.



We completed 2024 with our annual family pantomime, this year was “Girl In The Hood” by James O’Sullivan, a modern take on the traditional Red Riding Hood fairytale. This represented our cheapest bought in script as we worked with Off The Wall Plays again. We continued our additional fundraising efforts during this production by running fun game stalls with prizes in the side room the hour before the Saturday performances as we still aim to eventually have enough funds to purchase a wireless microphone system and licence. We did attempt a Sunday matinee for the first time with this pantomime, due mainly to the reduced cost of the script, but this did not seem to bring in the crowds, so will not be continued into the 2025 season. Ticket prices overall were kept low and all attendees left with smiles on their faces.

Looking to the future, we are aiming to produce a repeat of our mini-pantomime, “The Princess And The Mouse” for free for children and their families in the community in the Summer of 2025. We will also continue to look at more ways to involve members in group activities and other ways to take live theatre into our local community.

PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT

We have a current Public Benefit Statement that has not been changed within the reporting period. Please see attached.

Public Benefit Statement for Charitable Purposes of Bispham CastAways

The benefit that flows from the purposes:

Promoting the enjoyment and better understanding of the arts, culture, heritage and science, in particular those relating to theatre and performance, through exposure to and participation in (either as audience member or physical participant) the art and culture of theatre and performance. Independent research (although gaps have been identified in their data) has found that exposure to cultural experiences and participation in the arts, can have deep value to the individual and the wider community. *(See the table below taken from "Understanding the Value and Impacts of Cultural Experiences - A Literature Review" prepared for Arts Council England by John D. Carnwath and Alan S. Brown for the value which the arts, culture, heritage and science can have.)*

CONCURRENT IMPACTS <i>(Those that occur during the experience)</i>	EXPERIENCED IMPACTS <i>(Observed post-event, hours or days later)</i>	EXTENDED AND CUMULATIVE IMPACTS <i>(Lifelong engagement/ memory, weeks or years later)</i>
Unconscious psycho-physical responses and states, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physiological response (heart rate, skin conductance) - Pre-cognitive response (arousal) - Captivation (flow, awe, absorption, concentration) - Energy and tension 	Short-term experienced impacts, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emotional affect and meaning - Spiritual uplift - Learning and critical reflection - Social connectedness - Aesthetic enrichment and creative activation <i>These impacts can occur before, during and after experiences, but are typically measured afterwards.</i>	Delayed impacts of individual events and impacts that accrue through repeated engagement in cultural activities over time, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Memory of event - Sense of social belonging - Increased cultural capacity - Increased capacity for empathy - Expanded worldview - Health benefits - Subjective well-being

These benefits will be evidenced through:

- Photo and video documentation.
- Regular internal and external qualitative assessment.
- Regular collation of quantitative data on charitable activities, audiences and participation.

- Regular collation of qualitative data on charitable activities using surveys (*some based on those used in independent research into the value of cultural experiences*) of the general public in Bispham and the surrounding areas, audience members and participants, some targeted to specific groups of the general public if the need arises.
- Regular reporting of charitable activities and financial performance in annual trustee reports, audited annual accounts and other reports where necessary.

The beneficiaries are:

The beneficiaries are the general public, in particular but not exclusively those living in Bispham and the surrounding areas. However, some projects may address the needs of specific sections of society, for example access to a one act play festival targeting young people to increase their confidence, social connectedness, exposure to cultural experiences, health and wellbeing, etc.

The possibility of harm:

The possibility of harm, for example by physical or emotional injury incurred through participation in or experiencing of theatre performances or workshops, are outweighed by the benefits. The risks are significantly reduced by the policies and procedures in place to address them, such as the health and safety policy, rules and safeguarding policies.

The possibility of private benefit:

Any private benefit gained, for example through rental or improvement of rehearsal space, exposure of and payment for specific artists' works, advertisement of or increased use of goods and services from the local area, are ancillary to the charitable purposes and is greatly outweighed by the public benefit. No trustee or member of the CIO, nor any connected person to them, will make a financial gain from it's activities. (*See the Constitution for further detail on this.*)

Provision for the poor

The CIO will charge for membership and performances, so to ensure we have made provision for people who are financially struggling to benefit from our services, we may:

- Regularly review the cost of our membership and tickets.
- Membership fees will be broken into four instalment payments.
- Offer concessionary ticket prices.
- Offer free or reduced price membership, where needed.
- Offer additional free or low cost performances of a play or event, for example a dress rehearsal performance.
- Offer family tickets.
- Perform in other venues like state schools and other community facilities.

Accounts

Bispham Castaways Financial Statement 01/09/2023 to 31/08/2024

Income

Productions. £4153.

Membership £ 490.

Storage IF. £400.

Noda. £449.

£5492.00.

B/f. £1042.27

Expenditure

Rent. £2500

Catering £867

Noda. £449

Printing. £188

Royalts. £198

£4202.00

Income £5492.00

Expend. £4202.00

Balance on hand £ 2332.27.

Bank £350.27

Cash £2082.00