



Darwen Heritage Centre, Railway Road, Darwen, Lancs, BB3 2RG. Tel: 01254 433140
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ANNUAL REPORT of the Trustees for the year ending 31st March 2024

Darwen Heritage Centre is a CIO Association, Registered No. 1183239, established on the 2nd May 2019.

Our aim is to provide a service to the people with an interest in the town and its Heritage which will satisfy the Objects of the Charity.

CHARITABLE OBJECTS

THE OBJECTS OF THE CIO ARE TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC IN THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF DARWEN AND SURROUNDING DISTRICTS AND THE UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION OF THE ARTS BY THE PROVISION AND MAINTENANCE OF AN EDUCATIONAL HERITAGE AND EXHIBITION CENTRE. NOTHING IN THIS CONSTITUTION SHALL AUTHORISE AN APPLICATION OF THE PROPERTY OF THE CIO FOR THE PURPOSES WHICH ARE NOT CHARITABLE IN ACCORDANCE WITH [SECTION 7 OF THE CHARITIES AND TRUSTEE INVESTMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 2005] AND [SECTION 2 OF THE CHARITIES ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2008]

In all of the activities arranged throughout the year the Trustees have had the Charity Commission's Guidance on Public Benefit in mind.

The charity continues to invest a lot of time in gathering, archiving and storing items which demonstrate the town's heritage.

GOVERNANCE

The CIO is governed by its Constitution which allows for a Committee of Trustees (No less than 3 and no more than 12) elected by the Membership at the Annual General Meeting to carry out the day to day running and decision making during the year. All Members have the same voting rights. If there are no new applications for

the position of Trustee then the Constitution allows for the re-instatement of the retiring Trustees with the acceptance of the Membership. Currently the CIO has the maximum 12 Trustees on the Committee.

ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT THE OBJECTS

The Charity continues to make progress towards attaining Independent Museum Status and there has been no change to the Business Plan for this year. Thanks go to the many Trustees who have worked on the creation of the Policy Documents and are now preparing the Process Documents. These have improved the way in which the Charity operates and make the internal organisation more professional and easier to administer whilst maintaining a working standard throughout.

Much of the work over the last year has gone into assessing our needs as a growing institution with a focus on new cabinets for both the front and back rooms. Each room provided different challenges with storage and ease of changing displays the main features of the back room, whilst security and environmental control was the aim for the front. A Darwen company, Blue Insignia was chosen for the back room after obtaining three quotes from different local companies with John Marsden completing the negotiations. Preparations for the installation of the new cabinets took place over three months and the maintenance crew worked diligently to make the room ready. It was not until November that the cabinets were ready for installation and this has made a big difference to both the visitor experience and the ease of use for the volunteers. The amount of storage space has been increased, and the archive items have now been placed in storage by catalogue categories which rationalises the way items are stored and makes it easier to locate relevant items. This work is now ongoing under the guidance of Anne McNally who is responsible for the catalogue ensuring that all items are properly recorded and locations noted on the catalogue.

The cabinet for the front room is a museum quality cabinet, custom built by Display Projects, after following the same process of acquiring three separate quotes. This was specifically required to house the items returned to Darwen on loan from the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, together with the items which have intrinsic value within our own collection. We have the Lloyd Trust to thank for providing a grant of £10,000 towards the overall cost of almost £19,000 for this cabinet and Darwen Heritage Centre is proud to say that in collaboration with the Borough Council we have been able to bring these important items into Darwen for display to the general public.

April saw the first major loan exhibition at the Darwen Heritage Centre. Hans Lowe approached the Centre with the offer of loaning 23 Morton paintings for exhibition on a 12 month basis. These were accepted and the Centre provided insurance cover for the 12 months, re-organising how visitors could access the room to ensure the safety of the paintings. The exhibition proved very popular and many people came to the Centre over the year especially to view the Morton exhibition.

During the year we provided space for art exhibitions by local artists Lynn Wilson and Hubert Bentley, both of whom made donations to the Centre. The Heritage Art Group who meet at the Centre every Friday between 10am and 1pm also exhibited their work. Another new exhibitor at the Centre was the Darwen Writer's Group who meet at the Centre twice a month.

Two more book launch events were held at the Centre, the first during October was Harold Heys' book on Darwen Tower which proved very popular. The second took place in January - Roy Parker's book on the two chapels at Pickup Bank.

Tony Foster arranged another successful series of talks for the spring and autumn sessions. These included topics on Garden Villages, Darwen Tower, Walk Around Darwen with Darwen FC, the Life of J H Morton and the Lloyd Trust.

Temporary displays created by the volunteers at the Centre included St John's Church and the Reverend Philip Graham by Pat Smith, Darwen Amateur Football by Mick Kelly, The Railway on the Moors by Michael Bauer, The Lloyd Trust by Joyce Hudson, Three Darwen Men who Played for Arsenal FC by Albert Gavagan and Homes of the Gentry by Joyce Hudson. This helps to draw back visitors for repeat visits as the displays are changing on a regular basis. This also gives volunteers the opportunity to develop their skills in research, planning and display.

Another successful Calendar was developed for 2024 by Lesley Leah and Joyce Hudson bringing in much appreciated funds. Having made a profit from the sales any remaining copies after the New Year were distributed free of charge to local rest homes

In December we had the annual get together at the Whitehall Country Club where around 25 volunteers came together for a celebration Christmas meal.

The maintenance crew had been very busy over the year and some major projects required the help of local businesses including the relaying of the tiling in the hallway – something which is appreciated by many of the visitors to the Centre. The gutters and downpipes have been painted, the front top window has been sealed and other essential works have been completed to keep the building in good repair and also to enhance the external appearance of the Centre which is in a Conservation Area. The gardens have been maintained by the volunteers including Anne Holden, Pat Smith and Gordon Smith and many of the rooms have been repaired and repainted internally by Steve Hargreaves. Alan Ratcliffe and George Swanton have been kept busy by the electrics in the building and Alan has completed the PAT testing of electrical equipment which has saved a considerable cost.

Alan Southworth has been very busy using his craft skills to keep the fabric of the Centre in good order, plus covering the opening of the Centre for groups outside the normal opening hours. Les Calvey has also been providing much needed cover for opening the Centre for groups who have booked rooms, creating income for the Charity.

The Centre has welcomed over 3,000 visitors again and the visitor book indicates that many of these have been from outside the Borough Boundary which shows that we are contributing to the economic benefit of the town.

FINANCE

The Treasurer has increased the amount in the savings account to £25,000 to provide a contingency fund which would tide us over for at least two years if the income from the sub-letting of the upper floor should cease.

The increased costs required for the upgrade on security in order to protect the items on loan amounts to over £2,350 per annum with the insurance cover included.

The bank balance at the start of the year was £66,654.66 which gave us the opportunity to purchase some capital items in the form of display cabinets. With the

loan items arriving from Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council we required a museum quality cabinet to provide both security and environmental control and sought assistance in the purchase from the Lloyd Trust who provided a grant of £10,000. The Centre invested a further £16,000 which meant that the balance at the end of the year had reduced to £50,379.82. The total income for the year amounted to £40,273.44 and the expenditure was £56,548.28 which means that overall the Centre was able to cover the running costs for the year from its income.

We have to thank Sue Gavagan for handling the Treasurer's role and producing accurate records which have once again been verified for this year.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT & SUPPORT

The Centre continues to support local schools with their coverage of the National Curriculum and Ann Holden has provided support in this respect throughout the year. Schools can access this service without charge and this year we have catered for the following schools:

May – 31 pupils and staff from Ashleigh

June – 30 pupils and staff from St Barnabas

October – 30 pupils and staff from St Joseph's

October – 60 pupils and staff from Avondale

December – 180 pupils and staff from DACA

Other groups who have accessed the facilities outside our opening hours include the Beavers and Brownies from two separate groups, the Belthorn History Group and the South Pennines Park with a party of Ukraine visitors.

All of this activity helps to meet our Object of educating the local people about the Heritage and History of Darwen.

THE WAY FORWARD

The new cabinets have made a big difference to the way that the artefacts can be displayed and stored when not on display. The intention now is to complete the purchase of three more identical display cabinets from Blue Insignia and then assess how to best display the other artefacts including the various large models to good effect. We are continuing to move forward towards

Independent Museum Status and this involves the re-organising of our collection to best effect. Many of the volunteers are involved in this process alongside their normal duties. The process documents need to be in place before the end of the year and these need to be tested and appraised.

Several attempts have been made to engage with ethnic minority groups this year but so far no progress has been made. This still remains one of our priority aims so that the Heritage Centre can be seen by all sections of the community to be inclusive.

With an ageing group of both volunteers and Trustees we need to attract a younger group of volunteers to help with the running of the Centre to ensure continuity in the future.

Reciepts and Payments for the Year to 31 March 2024

31 March 2023 bank Balance	£ 66,643.02
31 March 2023 cash Balance	£ 11.64
	<u>£ 66,654.66</u>

Income

Rent	£ 7,447.20	
Room Hire	£ 3,954.50	
Donations	£ 8,933.50	
Talks/Events	£ 692.50	
Sales	£ 2,552.89	
Membership	£ 1,121.00	
Grants	£ 13,000.00	
100 Club	£ 1,681.00	
Interest from Savings Account	£ 204.11	
Rebate	£ 686.74	£ 40,273.44
Total	£ 40,273.44	£ 106,928.10

Expenditure

Rates	£ -	
Electric	£ 4,536.99	
Gas	£ 9,091.69	
Water	£ 494.07	
Phone/Broadband	£ 631.59	
Insurance	£ 4,072.78	
TV & Music Licence	£ 159.00	
Website	£ 108.86	
Security	£ 2,168.18	
Exhibitions	£ 30.55	
Building	£ 1,515.82	
Storage	£ 257.40	
Purchases	£ 32,013.41	
Admin	£ 713.61	
100 Club	£ 660.00	
Subscriptions	£ 71.00	
Petty Cash	£ 23.33	
Total	£ 56,548.28	£ 56,548.28
		£ 50,379.82

Balance per Bank Statement	31/03/2024	£ 50,341.51
Petty Cash Balance	31/03/2024	£ 38.31
		<u>£ 50,379.82</u>

I have examined the books & records for the above year & found everything to be correct & in order
D Walsh 5/6/24



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

Darwen Heritage Centre

On accounts for the year
ended

31 March 2024

Charity no
(if any)

1183239

Set out on pages

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above
charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 March 2024.

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").

Independent
examiner's statement

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 the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission
under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

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:

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

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection
with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a
proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:

D Walsh

Date:

5/6/24

Name:

DIANE WALSH

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

/

Address:

10 BOSKEY CLOSE

DARWEN

LANCS BB3 3LF