

D R A F T

Poetry Whitchurch
Annual Report
2022-23

Foreword

Welcome to our annual report for the period 4 February 2022 - 3 February 2023.

This year, as the threat of Covid reduced for most people, we were able to bring some of our early planning to fruition.

We kicked off our "in person" open mic in style, with a series of impressive guest poets and a plethora of local poets.

We delivered a series of regular educational seminars about a wide range of published poets.

We grew and established the first of our poetry development groups, helping local poets develop their work and confidence.

We began work on a series of further activities, securing finances and building volunteer teams needed to run them.

We have planned a range of further activities including workshops delivered by renowned and highly skilled poets; work with young people in the area so that they grow up with poetry and; partnerships with sector leading organisations so that the people of our area can access opportunities of the highest quality.

We want to thank everyone that has played a part in the journey so far and we cant wait for the next twelve months.

The Trustees
Poetry Whitchurch

Section 1 Governance

Trustees

1.1 At the start of the reporting period the following Trustees were in place (by surname in alphabetical order):

Prof Mark Barrow; Carol Finch; Simon Hamlyn; Helen Kay; Harvey Vasey; Gareth Von Dinther

1.2 Arrivals to the Trustee Board in this period

Ruth Shepherd (27 January 2023)
Simon Hamlyn (reappointed 27 January 2023)

1.3 The Chair of Trustees remained Harvey Vasey; the Secretary was Gareth Von Dinther and Treasurer Carol Finch.

1.4 The following associate member was in place:

Therese Hickland

Trustee meetings

1.5 Trustee meetings were held both in person and remotely.

1.6 During the year Trustee meetings moved to a quarterly basis supported by a subcommittee structure to carry out delegated work.

Annual report and accounts

1.7 Our first and second annual reports and accounts were filed with the Charity Commission. Details can be found on the Charity Commission website or viewed in full online along with this report at our website: www.poetrywhitchurch.com

Registered address

1.8 The charity's registered address remained Smallbrook Lodge, Smallbrook Road, Whitchurch, Shropshire SY131BX

Section 2: Objectives, activities and performance for the year

Objectives

2.1 At the start of this reporting year we had three main operational areas. Due to Covid uncertainties, Trustees agreed at the start of the reporting year that the development of these strands should be our main focus in 2022:

- A) Poetry open mic
- B) Poetry seminars
- C) Poetry development groups

2.2 In January 2023, as the severity of Covid waned for most people, Trustees agreed that we would begin work on two further activity strands:

- D) Poetry workshops
- E) Poetry slams

2.3 Each of these five operational strands is overseen by a Trustee and has agreed scope, delegations and budgetary arrangements within the overall financial governance framework. An update on each strand is provided below.

A: Poetry Open Mic

2.4 Poetry Open Mic was our key initial activity. In the last few years covid disrupted what we could do, but we have been keen to take positive lessons and look for creative opportunities from the experience - and continue to support those who were unable to meet face to face.

2.5 We took the decision to continue online open mics and rotate “in-person” and online events on a monthly basis. This approach mirrored other creative/literary organisations and helped keep together a strong core creative community at a time when many people who remained covid-vulnerable felt cast adrift.

2.6 We restarted “in person” open mics in the late spring 2022 and made initial use of an atmospheric new venue, the Old Music Hall in Whitchurch. There was a real upsurge in interest and audiences of 40 plus attendees in the opening months. We moved to Whitchurch Civic Centre in the colder months.

2.7 “In person” open mics featured two quality guests poets and an array of regular local open mic poets to help showcase their work and continue their performance development. Guest poets in this period included:

Liz Lefroy, Nick Ferenczy, Emma Purshouse, Steve Pottinger, Sheila Blackburn, Nick Degg, Joy Francis, Mark Pajak, Charlotte Baldwin.

2.8 A strong new team of volunteers underpinned all open mic activities and were integral to planning and delivery. We are very grateful for their time, skills and dedication.

2.9 Online open mic continued our work from the previous year. It brought together a regular crowd of poets reading their new work using Zoom.

B: Poetry Seminars

2.10 Our seminars started in Spring 2033 and played an important role in our delivering our educational purpose of providing a wide appreciation of poetry in the area.

2.11 Seminars have taken place roughly every six weeks and have featured a diverse range of published poets including:

Charles Causley, Imtiaz Dharker, Carol Ann Duffy, Thomas Hardy, Seamus Heaney, Ted Hughes and Maya Angelou.

2.12 We would like to thank everyone who put in significant research time in leading the seminars and to Sainsburys for use of the Old Barn facility.

C: Poetry development groups

2.13 The development groups have become an increasingly powerful and important part of our offer.

2.14 The groups are designed to help new and establish poets develop their technical abilities and provide the confidence to write and perform.

2.15 Our first development group commenced in April 2022, meeting online each month. A second development group was established in January 2023. Plans are in development to develop further groups and related mentoring activities.

2.16 Feedback from group members include:

“It has been such a privilege to be a part of the group. I have learned so much from the others and their generosity of spirit has been incredible”.

“I have struggled to create poems on a regular basis but the development group has given me the impetus to do so”

“I found the process of closing a poem very challenging until I was part of the development group. I feel I have definitely improved as a poet due to the help and support of the other group members”.

D: Poetry workshops

2.17 Trustees agreed on January 2023 to expand our remit into poetry workshops and we agreed a formal policy for the operation of the new activity, which can be found on our website alongside our other policies.

2.18 Our first public workshop is planned to take place early into the next reporting period led by the TS Eliot shortlisted poet Mark Pajak.

E: Poetry Slams

2.19 To help increase the diversity of our live performance offer, the Trustee board agreed in January 2023 that we would deliver Poetry Slams. The first Slam is planned for summer 2023. We envisage poetry slams as an important part of our ongoing work with young people (section 3).

Section 3: Strategic development

Young People

3.1 As part of our commitment to poetry in the area we established a Young People subcommittee which first met in November 2022.

3.3 We worked with our main local education provider Sir John Talbot's School in Whitchurch to establish an ongoing plan to engage the students in writing and understanding poetry.

3.4 We began our early work with the school with two initial poetry writing sessions attended by around x students. Feedback.

3.4 We are in discussion to bring exciting additional partnerships into the ongoing relationship for the benefit of the school students.

Partnerships

3.5 In the reporting year we have laid the groundwork for a series of partnerships to help deliver our objectives.

3.6 We are pleased to have begun work with the Arvon Foundation and have begun discussions with other poetry organisations of national standing and key policy and funding organisations such as Arts Council England amongst others.

Organisational development

3.7 There was considerable work on the charity's capacity and capability including structural development, new Trustees, subcommittees, building volunteer teams and policy development. More details can be found on our website.

Section 4: Financial

4.1 During the year the Trustees regularly reviewed the financial position across all workstreams. The full end year accounts are attached to this document and available on our website.

4.2 A new Finance and Fundraising fundraising subcommittee was agreed during the reporting period to help forecast needs and lead on fundraising activities as the organisation expands.



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Poetry Whitchurch

1187755

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

01/04/2022

To

31/03/2023

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Voluntary Receipts	25	-	-	25	500
Activities For Generating Funds (Trading)	372	-	-	372	44
Other Receipts	-	-	-	-	25
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	397	-	-	397	569
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	397	-	-	397	569
A3 Payments					
Venue Rental	68	-	-	68	-
Poet Travel Expenses	126	-	-	126	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	194	-	-	194	-
A4 Asset and investment purchases. (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	194	-	-	194	-
Net of receipts/(payments)	203	-	-	203	569
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	-	-	-	-	-
Cash funds this year end	203	-	-	203	569

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Cash in hand	569	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	569	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	Agreement Error	OK	OK
B2 Other monetary assets		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities		Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	