

EQUART

England & Wales · Charity number 1198663

Details

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2022-04-20

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

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Activities

Objects: THE PROMOTION OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN THE ARTS FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT BY PROMOTING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AND OVERCOMING DISADVANTAGES EXPERIENCED BY ARTISTS WITH A PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT

Activities: To be developed

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Sponsors Or Undertakes Research
- **What:** Education/training, Disability, Arts/culture/heritage/science, Human Rights/religious Or Racial Harmony/equality Or Diversity
- **Who:** Children/young People, People With Disabilities

Geography

- Throughout England

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-04-01	£0	£3	-	-
2024-04-01	£0	£0	-	-
2023-04-01	£8,830	£8,830	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
DENISE LEIGH	Chair	2022-04-20
Alison Magnall		2023-02-20
Chris Ryde		2023-02-20
Penny Hulbert		2023-02-20
Virginia de Ledesma frsm		2022-04-28

EQUART

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Accounts

EQUART ANNUAL REPORT

Following Equart's AGM on 9th December 2025 between Trustees Chris Ryde (CR), Alison Magnall (AM) and Virginia de Ledesma (VL) the following points have been discussed and approved:

* Equart's project to develop assistive technology for blind performers has been on hold since 2024 due to the designers (VL's) health issues. In the AGM meeting of 2025 the Trustees agreed to 'mothball' the project for a year to see if the situation improves, which it has.

* The trustees agreed that a relocation of the project to the UK's Blind Veterans Association Rustington, Sussex, would improve the projects access to resources. It was felt that to restart the research with a group of participants who had a range of issues might broaden the scope of the project, making it easier to raise funding and increasing its reach to people who can use the assistive technology we have designed and are developing.

* It was noted that Equarts bank account with Metro has been charged £3 interest during 2025 and now stands at £144.00.

* VL is in the process of moving home in 2026 and reestablishing momentum on funding and development.

V de L

Approved by Trustees and Chris Ryde on 23 February 2026

Account Dates 02.04.2024 - 01-04-25

Carried forward from 2023/24

Expenditure for current year

charity number 1198663 - Equart

Amount in

147

Bank charges Metro Bank

Amount out

Balance in account



3

144

EQUART

England & Wales - Charity number 1198663

Accounts

Eqart Accounts - charity number Amount in

Dates 02.04.2023 - 01-04-24

Carried forward from previous year

147

Expenditure for current year

Amount out

Balance in account

0

147

EQUART

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ACCOUNTS for EQUART CIO (Year beginning 22/4/2022)

INCOME

Business grant (Forest of Dean district council)	£1,000
Donations from Newland fundraising concert	£ 250
float for concert	£ 40
Cash loan for setting up bank account	£ 40
Shaw Foundation grant for proof-of-concept stage of technology development	£ 7,500
SUB TOTAL	£ 8,830

EXPENSES

Solicitor services during application for charitable status	£ 234
Programmes for fundraiser	£ 200
Sound technician (Jon Ingham)	£ 100
Banner	£ 42
Sumofus card machine	£ 179.98
Posters	£ 60
Gift Aid Envelopes	£ 46
Rubber stamp	£ 28.10
Flowers	£ 30
Music	£ 22.10
Organising expenses	£ 241
SUB TOTAL CONCERT EXPENSES	£ 1183.18

EXPENSES FOR EQUART PROOF OF CONCEPT (technology development)

Ben Kinnaird (Wireframer)	£ 3,300
Dimitris Kyriakoudos (programmer)	£ 1,500
Virginia de Ledesma (designer)	£ 2,700
SUB TOTAL EXPENSES FOR PROOF OF CONCEPT	£ 7,500

TOTAL EXPENSES FOR FUNDRAISER & PROOF OF CONCEPT	£ 8,683.18
Balance in Metro Account	£ 147 cr

EQUART ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2022-May 2023

ABOUT EQUART

Equart was founded in 2006 to alleviate the suffering of professional performers in the Arts when they lose their profession due to the onset of visual impairment during their careers. It was incorporated as a CIO in April 2022 and was first established when a colleague of Equart's founder (Virginia de Ledesma), baritone Andrew Heggie, became blind and lost his career in 2006.

Equart's overall objective is to design and develop assistive technology to overcome the obstacles to the inclusion of blind and visually impaired musicians and performers in the arts, and to ensure the finished App is freely available to blind visually impaired performers through robust marketing strategies. Although Equart was incorporated in April 2022 by November we had run a series of fundraising concerts and secured funding from The Shaw Foundation for a proof of concept development phase. The objective of the proof of concept stage was to test our design and the rationale behind it against a panel of specialist IT advisors and to produce a 'wireframe': a template showing how the App was going to be built.

Musicians and performers train for many years before they can become professionals and frequently have accumulated decades of experience and valuable skills at the time their careers are interrupted (the latest case being Judy Dench). Equart believes that this suffering can be alleviated with the use of an indoor navigation aid, a two-tiered haptic response system which works indoors with Beacon instead of satellite technology-which only works outdoors- is and modelled on a conventional Satellite Navigation system (SatNav). After fifteen years of research and co-designing technology alongside its users, Equart was incorporated in 2022 to develop the design for this assistive technology in three stages: 1) proof on concept, 2) prototype development and 3) trialling and testing.

Since its beginnings, Equart has expanded to include visually impaired children and young adults who aspire to careers in the performing arts and in the Music industry but who need assistive technology to be included on the same level as their sighted counterparts. Our stakeholders come from a broad spectrum of industries from education to the assistive technology currently being developed by, for example, the Drake project, organisations who represent the interests of visually impaired people such as the RNIB to the Arts Council and companies such as Extant whose members are visually impaired actors. Once the development phase is completed, our potential customers will include schools, theatre/music venues and the Disabled Students Allowance department of the government's education funding streams who have expressed an interest in this kind of assistive technology. There has also been interest from the patient rehabilitation department of Social Services and Care Homes who want to improve the quality of life for their residents, many of whom have visual impairments.

Structure of organisation: Equart is a CIO.

Management: During the project that has taken place in our first year as a CIO the trustees have been involved in regular discussions about how the project is evolving, and have participated in the process of development and fundraising. Management strategy is based on meetings, discussions and participation.

Where our money comes from:

Fundraising concerts: From October 1st-November 12th 2022 Equart ran a series of fundraising concerts involving visually impaired performers to raise finances, publicise the work we do and spread awareness.

In November **the Shaw foundation** confirmed they were going to fund the proof-of-concept stage, which took place successfully between March and May 2023.

Local government grants: we also secured a local government business grant from the business section of the Forest of Dean District council.

How we have spent the funding

The expenses incurred in the proof of concept stage have been the fees of the IT consultants that were engaged to test out the design of the Navigation system and to build the wireframe. A team of Equart's own specialist consultants (the navigation system's designer, a specialist wireframer and a PhD research student in programming), pitted their design knowledge against that of a team of ten Computer Science graduates from South Wales University, in a series of discussions on how best to make the Navigation fit the needs of the user, the performing arts industry and the management of venues/theatres. The result was a wireframe which demonstrates the rationale of the resulting design and works as a template for its future development.

What's next?

The next, and second, stage is the development of the App prototype. For this a small team of the designer, a programmer and a haptics developer will be needed who have already been approached. For funding Equart has been working closely with Business Wales towards securing a loan which will be match-funded with private funds.

For the third stage (trailing and testing), the trustees are considering a symposium funded by Arts Council Wales that includes a presentation in which the blind and visually impaired performers who were involved in the trialling process will demonstrate how the App works.

Activities and objectives during the period between April 2022 and February 2024

Our aim was to raise funding for the first, proof-of-concept stage of development for Equart's design for assistive technology. Preparations for a series of fundraising concerts in autumn 2022 started shortly after Equart became incorporated and the first concert took place on October 1st 2022 (the final on November 12th). Our objective was to talk on BBC Gloucester and have articles published in the Hereford Times/Monmouth beacon about the work we do, to reach out towards people who would benefit but who might not have been aware of the technology we were developing. We wanted to hear from the parents of gifted blind performers, and musicians and to create partnerships and relationships with new stakeholders. Unfortunately, our visually impaired singer was not well for two of the concerts which we had to cancel at the last moment.

However, we were successful in our aim to raise awareness, as a contact with the Shaw Foundation Trust emerged as a result of the first concert. The Shaw Foundation became our main source of funding for the proof of concept stage (March-May 2023).

How the trustees contributed

The trustees were involved in drawing up the contracts for the IT specialists and acted as advisors and support during the first stage. These took time and consideration as a legal framework had to be created to protect the IP issues involved. Discussions also had to take place about the availability and

payment of the participants. The trustees were also invited to attend and contribute to the weekly discussions (or 'scrums') that took place over the 3 months of the proof-of-concept stage.