



Annual Report 1st January 2023 – 30th June 2024

1. Governance and Strategic Development

BSL Celebration became a Registered Charity in June 2023, Reg. Charity No 1203726 with the aim to organise events that share BSL in an engaging and joyful way with the mainstream public in local communities across the UK in order to further promote engagement with BSL and the deaf community, ultimately contributing towards building a society in which deaf people can participate fully and equally.

The First Trustees were: Claire Cummings (Chair), Adrian Simpson (Treasurer), Barry Avison (Secretary) and Sam Egerton-Kemp.

After consultation, including SWOT Analysis and Risk Assessment, within the Trustees, BSCL entered into a partnership with the BDA, British Deaf Association. The Service Level Agreement was signed in October 2023. Under this contract, BSCL supports the BDA's #Taking BSL Forward movement through bringing BSL into the public domain and increasing support for BSL in local communities. In return, the BDA are supporting BSCL to grow as an organisation with aspirations to become the next big festival movement by applying for funding towards capacity building and delivering BSL Festival activities, supporting with fund management, providing advice on policies, human resources, communications, website and social media.

Mutual understanding, co-operation and collaboration between the BDA and BSCL underpins the SLA. This is to run for 6 years in the first instance.

Claire Cummings resigned as Chair and a Trustee in September 2023 due to a conflict of interest between running day to day operations and being 'her own boss as Chair'. She was appointed Creative Director (currently unpaid) by the Trustees and Sammi Villabon was elected as a Trustee. Barry Avison became Interim Chair.

After difficulties with accessing the Co-op bank account by the Treasurer and Creative Director (both are deaf), a Lloyd's Bank Business account was opened in December 2023, which serves BSCL's needs very well.

Adrian Simpson resigned as a Trustee in April 2024 but Kathleen Grehan was elected in January 2024 as a Trustee and took on the role of Treasurer from Adrian. I would like to thank Adrian for all his hard work in getting BSCL set up as a Charity, leading the BDA partnership consultation, organising the bank account and greatly assisting the Creative Director with developing clear and transparent budget records for BSCL events and activities. He was a great asset and his support with getting BSCL established is greatly appreciated.

2. Funding

With each event, funding is growing.

Fleet BSL Fest costs were kept very low (£1,900.38 in total) through support in kind (free venue, the PA, projector and tables and chairs loaned free of charge), all organisation being carried out on a voluntary basis, assembling the stage ourselves and keeping the staged programme basic. The BDA covered the cost of the interpreters and BSLC generated £175.00 from stall hire fees / donations on the day, and £764.97 was raised from the Hartley Wintney Inclusive Quiz. There was a short-fall of £587.40.

Guildford BSL Fest had higher costs due to needing to hire marquees for the stalls and greater performance fees. The evening event did not generate enough ticket sales to cover the cost of holding the event. However, BSLC raised half of the total costs through stall holder fees, ticket sales, donations and £1,000 sponsorship from Sign Video and £500 from Experience Guildford. Dot Sign Language very generously covered the remaining £3,430.98, so the event broke even.

The costs of holding Manchester BSL Fest were considerably higher (£16,393.36), though still very good value for the scale of the event, owing to support in kind, performers using their Access to Work funding to cover interpreting costs and the Creative Director working for free. With the agreement of the Trustees, the Creative Director claimed travel and subsistence expenses from January 2024. £6,000 sponsorship was received from SignLive, £1,000 from Manchester Deaf Centre, £2,000 from City Co and £600 towards PR materials from the BDA. The auction of a picture raised £300 and the BSL Comedy Night ticket sales raised £400 in excess of the cost of holding it. All the bone china mugs were sold, but the crowdfunding was not successful.

In total, there was a £3,260.25 short-fall from Manchester BSL Fest and two fund-raising events are planned to generate income to cover this; 'A Celebration of BSL' in November 2024 and selling the remaining merchandise (ceramic mugs and coasters) at the Manchester Deaf Centre Christmas fair (stall offered to BSLC for free).

In April 2024, BSLC was awarded a grant of £20,000 from the National Lottery Communities Awards For All Fund for Southampton BSL Fest to be held in April 2025.

3. Events

Three BSL Fests were held:

Fleet BSL Fest on Saturday 8th July 2023 – staged programme and stalls in Hart Shopping Centre

Guildford BSL Fest on Saturday 14th October 2023 – staged programme in Tunsgate Quarter and stalls on the High Street and the BSL Party in the evening.

Manchester BSL Fest from Monday 22nd – Sunday 28th April 2024 – various events across Central Manchester over the week with the BSL Party in the Park (staged programme and stalls) in Cathedral Gardens on the Saturday.

Detailed evaluations were written following each event and a summary of the key points has been given below.

3.1 Fleet BSL Fest

This was a learning experience – it was BSLC's first event away from the Creative Director's home and being run independently from the Creative Director's family, friends and local community.

Lessons learnt:

- Pre-event planning – establish a local committee, check the location and local flavour, and make contact with the local Council before committing to the event.
- Volunteers – more needed, training and an understanding of their roles is needed.
- Establish a partnership with a local BSL training centre.
- Develop interactive ways of engaging the wider public in staged BSL tasters – doing a 'lesson' on stage does not work.

3.2 Guildford BSL Fest

It was challenging holding the staged programme and stalls in separate areas, but high numbers of volunteers and careful organisation made this work. A half day volunteers' orientation day was held a month before and there was a high turn-out of volunteers. There was a very effective partnership with Dot Sign Language and Kathleen Grehan, the Director, was an invaluable support. Kathleen did a very successful BSL taster on stage – she taught colours through the Rainbow Song and by having children onstage to sign with her – this engaged mainstream passers-by.

The risk assessments and event plans were required to be much more detailed and very welcome support with this was given by Guildford Borough Council. A high number of deaf people from across the South turned up, making a real 'BSL presence' across the centre of Guildford on a busy shopping day. We did questionnaires for the first time and the responses were striking – more than 30% of the respondents didn't know what BSL was and over 70% didn't know when BSL was legally recognised in Law.

A short Business and Community Leaders' Reception was held just prior to the staged programme starting. SignVideo (sponsors) and Rebecca Mansell, CEO of the BDA,

gave short presentations highlighting effective inclusive practices. The Mayor of Guildford, Lead Councillor and the local MP all signed part of their speeches.

Lessons learnt:

- Volunteers needed more in-depth training on their roles and possible scenarios, including CSWs on engaging hearing members of the public with stall-holders.
- Grow a list of interpreters for stage work.
- Make the stage running order available earlier.
- Ticketed events need to be well attended in order to cover the costs.

3.3 Manchester BSL Fest

This was a much bigger event, running for a week, with a range of free and ticketed events held in the week at / by local partner venues with the main event being the BSL Party in the Park. All the events were successful, attended by a mixture of deaf and hearing people and were deaf-led. Hearing staff at the Poetry Library organised the BSL Heritage event but ensured that deaf people took centre stage during the event. The BSL Comedy Night sold out quickly and made a profit.

Manchester City Council were very supportive of the event and ensured the Creative Director had sufficient guidance to complete the very detailed Event Plans. The BSL Party in the Park was passed by the Event Management Meeting without any alterations, save for the addition of a fire risk and plan.

Deaf Awareness training was delivered to key partner venues and we had great support from 53two, Central Library, MMU, MAG and the National Football Museum. Manchester Deaf Centre were wonderful event partners and have taken forward working with partner organisations towards inclusive practices since the BSL Fest. It was incredible having key deaf history artefacts on display near the entrance to Central Library, including the minutes of the Milan 1880 conference.

The BSL Party in the Park was a huge success with a very effective staged programme hosting a wide range of engaging performances, including an interactive BSL session by Stockport HVS, and a strong MC and stage interpreting team. The staged programme was shared publicly from January 2024. The peak audience was at 10am – 2.30pm and Granada TV recorded footage that was shown on the 6pm news, including an interview with the Creative Director.

Volunteers who attended the training day (delivered by the Creative Director and Stuart Harrison from D&H Trailblazers) carried out their roles effectively, and the CSWs were more confident to approach the hearing public. The Chief Stewards rotated the volunteers so that they all had a turn by the stage and there were enough volunteers to

do separate morning and afternoon shifts. Control stall was manned very ably and was well situated to see the whole event.

All questionnaire respondents were shocked that BSL was recently legally recognised.

Lessons learnt:

- Check costings for electricity supply.
- Communications at the BSL Party in the Park to go through Control rather than the Creative Director, so freeing her up to be the welcoming face of BSLC.
- Bring a mobile powerpack to charge up the phone used for the sum up card reader.
- Develop relationships with reliable performers.
- Packaging needed for mugs.

4. Numbers of attendees

Fest	Event	Number of attendees*			Number of volunteers		
		Deaf	Hearing	Total	Deaf	Hearing	Total
Fleet	Fleet BSL Fest	100	200	300	10	5	15
Totals for Fleet BSL Fest				300			15
Guildford	G’ford BSL Fest	300	1,500	1,800	18	20	38
	BSL Party	22	8	30	3	2	5
Totals for Guildford BSL Fest				1,830			43
M’cer	CityCo DA Training	0	40	40	1	1	2
	53two DA Training	0	8	8	1	0	1
	Football Mus DA	0	8	8	1	0	1
	BSL Art & Film Night	9	10	10	3	1	4
	BSL Storytimes (2)	15	65	80	2	1	3
	BSL Taster session	0	12	12	1	1	2
	BSL Heritage Event	26	28	54	3	4	7
	The Deafening Truth	100	900	1,000	1	2	3
	‘The Promise’ (3)	275	85	360	1	0	1
	BSL Comedy Night	90	60	150	3	2	5
	BSL Party in the Park	450	4,000	4,450	26	28	54
	‘My Hearing Mother’	5	7	12	1	1	2
Totals for Manchester BSL Fest				4,612			85
Number of people BSLC engaged with in 2023-24				6,742	Volunteers		143

*approximate numbers – includes guests, stall-holders, performers, interpreters, people attending specifically and people passing through.

5. Outcomes

5.1 Fleet:

- Local Councillor offered a free market stall to BSLC on International Day of Signed Languages to raise awareness after she attended Fleet and “learnt a lot”.

5.2 Guildford:

- Dot Sign Language took over £1,000 worth of new bookings for BSL courses, including an increase in L6 students.
- Angela Richardson, MP for Guildford, mentioned Guildford BSL Fest in the Parliamentary Working Party on the BSL Act and its progress on Tues 17th Oct 2023.
- Tunsgate Manager specifically asked to book Fletch@ for a future mainstream performance.
- Request from DAiSY Chain to work with selected deaf performers.
- Mayor of Guildford signed “Merry Christmas” and included a BSL interpreter in his videoed Christmas 2023 message to the local community.

5.3 Manchester

- All BSL courses at MDC for September 2024 were fully booked in June 2024, including additional courses – this has not happened before.
- An increase in requests for Deaf Awareness Training to MDC.
- MDC staff are reviewing DA Training, making it more current and including Deaf History and practical strategies for managing groups of BSL signers.
- Regular BSL storytimes at Central Library with MDC staff.
- Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester pledged to include BSL in all his Mayoral addresses and for BSL to be included in the curriculum in schools in GM.
- MDC working with the BDA towards Greater Manchester signing the BSL Charter.
- Local BSL tour guides and galleries are planning discussions to agree minimum standards and guidelines for organising BSL tours across Manchester.
- Staff at the Dept for Culture, Media and Sport attended the BSL Heritage and Party in the Park, recognised Manchester BSL Fest as an event of ICH (Intangible Cultural Heritage) and invited the Creative Director to a consultation on how ICH in the UK can be protected.
- Dolly Rose Campbell agreed to become a Patron of BSL Celebration.

6. What next?

Plans are underway for Southampton BSL Fest in April 2025 and a one day Leeds BSL Fest in July 2025 to coincide with the BDA’s BSL conference, and also fund-raising events in Manchester in Autumn 2024 to raise the last £3,000 towards the BSL Fest.

Claire Cummings, Creative Director 29/09/2024

BSL CELEBRATION

Charitable incorporated organisation

INTERNALLY EXAMINED FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR
YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2024

Company Number: CEO32782
Charity Number: 1203726

C/O Manchester Deaf Centre, Crawford House, Booth St E,
Manchester M13 9GH

Vision	Deaf people and BSL signers can participate fully and equally in mainstream communities and activities with effective and seamless two-way communication. The linguistic and cultural minority model of inclusion is followed in including BSL signers and all deaf people in the UK have the opportunity to become fluent in BSL.
Mission	To raise mainstream awareness and acceptance of BSL and deafness across the UK by organising public events that showcase and celebrate BSL.
Purpose	Grow BSL allies with an understanding of how to and willingness to work towards making services, events and community engagement inclusive of BSL signers so that deaf people can participate equally.
Strategic Objectives	• Increased numbers of people from mainstream communities sign up to take BSL courses. • Local BSL communities come together, the BSL Fests being a focal point for local re-engagement. • Councils work with the local BSL community to work towards signing up to the BSL Charter following the BSL Fest. • Public acceptance of BSL - people stop being afraid to approach and communicate with BSL signers. • Local services (e.g libraries) engage with the BSL community. • BSL events are included in communities. • BSL signers are empowered to make positive changes locally. • Share skills with local BSL signing volunteers so that follow up events are organised locally, with support from BSL Celebration as needed. • Showing inclusion of BSL signers in action.

How the strategic objectives will be achieved	• Organising engaging events to mark dates that are important to the BSL community including a big BSL Fest in a different city across the UK each year. • Organising two further BSL Fests each year, each in a different town, with a local flavour, each year in the UK. • Local partners identify local objectives and outcomes. • Inviting local MPs, Councillors and other influential policy makers to BSL Fests. Invite MPs to open the staged programme of events and to sign part of their speech. • Working in partnership with local BSL tutors and deaf services. • Working with deaf and hearing volunteers in local communities. • Mainstream public media (newspapers, Radio and TV where possible) engaged with to generate mainstream interest in BSL Fests and other events. • Working with volunteers to share skills and empower local BSL signers and BSL allies. • Providing opportunities for Level 6 BSL students and Trainee BSL Interpreters to practice and develop their BSL fluency and interpreting and voicing over skills.
Key Outcomes 2023	• Woking BSL signing residents work with Woking borough Council towards signing up to the BSL Charter. • Fleet and Guildford Councils commit to working towards signing up to the BSL Charter. • Uptake in people registering on BSL courses around Fleet and Guildford following the BSL Fests. • Follow up event in Woking organised by local BSL signers with support from BSL Celebration.
Key Outcomes 2024	• Increasing numbers of Manchester services and community events and projects are inclusive of BSL signers. • The BSL community of Manchester re-connects and organises follow up events with support as needed from BSL Celebration. • Following BSL Fests, local BSL signing residents work with the local Council towards signing up to the BSL Charter. • Local BSL signing residents organise follow up events.
USPs	• Events showcasing and celebrating BSL are directed at the mainstream public (not just the deaf / BSL community). • Deaf BSL signers lead teams of deaf and hearing BSL allies. • Volunteer led.

Statement of Financial Activities

Annual Account for the period between		2024		
1 July 2023 to June 30 2024		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
		£	£	£
Income				
Donations		940		940
Charitable Activities		15,811	20,000	35,811
Other Income		<u>4,095</u>		<u>4,095</u>
	1	20,846	20,000	40,846
Expenditure				
Raising Fund		3,721		3,721
Charitable Activities		<u>22,691</u>		<u>22,691</u>
	2	26,411	0	26,411
Net Income/(Expenditure)		<u>(5,565)</u>	20,000	<u>14,435</u>
Fund Balance Brought Forward	3	<u>150</u>		
Fund Balance Carried Forward		(5415)	20,000	14,585

Balance Sheet

Balance Sheet		
		£
Fixed Assets		
Intangible Assets	4	814
Tangible Assets		<u>0.00</u>
Current Asserts		
Debtors		0.00
Bank & Cash In Hande		<u>16,747</u>
		17,561
Creditors		<u>0.00</u>
Total Assets less Current Liability		<u>17,561</u>
Creditors - Amount falling due after more than one year	5	(2,976)
Net Assets		<u>14,585</u>
Income Funds		
Restricted	6	20,000
Unrestricted Fund	7	<u>(3,485)</u>
		<u>14,585</u>

Notes

	Notes	
1	Turnover for each Festival	
	Manchester	£13,133.11
	Guildford	£7041.31
	Fleet	£1,402.98
	Grant Received	
	Award For All Lottery	£20,000.00
2	Total Expenditure for each Festival	
	Manchester	£16,393.36
	Guildford	£7041.31
	Fleet	£1,990.38
3	Income 2023	£4,817.55
	Expenditure 2023	£4,667.19
	Fund Carried Forward	£150.36
4	Saleable Mugs and Artworks	
5	Interest Free Loan from Ms Cummings	
6	Restricted Fund for Southampton Festival	£20,000.00
7	Shortfall - Fundraising events are happening	

*Barry Avison, Chair, & Kathleen Grehan, Treasurer, submitted at AGM on 23rd October 2024,
Revised and approved at Trustees' General Meeting on 11th December 2024*

52 Grebe Close

Alton

Hampshire

GU34 2LR

7th January 2025

Dear Ms Cummings

Having inspected the accounts of BSL Celebration, I can confirm that the financial statements for 1st July 2023 to 30th June 2024 are a true and accurate reflection of the financial position of BSL Celebration as at 1st July 2024.

Kind regards

Adrian Simpson

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